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Letter dated 26 November 2018 from the Panel of Experts on South Sudan addressed to the President of the Security Council

The members of the Panel of Experts extended pursuant to Security Council resolution 2428 (2018) have the honour to transmit herewith the interim report, submitted in accordance with paragraph 19 (e) of the resolution. The report was provided to the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 2206 (2015) on 2 November 2018 and was considered by the Committee on 15 November 2018.

The Panel would appreciate it if the present letter and the interim report were brought to the attention of the members of the Security Council and issued as a document of the Council.

(*Signed*) Michael **Gibb**
Coordinator
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(*Signed*) Dean **Gillespie**
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Interim report of the Panel of Experts on South Sudan submitted pursuant to resolution 2428 (2018)

Summary

On 12 September 2018, Salva Kiir, the President of South Sudan, Riek Machar Teny, the leader of the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army in Opposition and other rebel factions signed the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan. Hopes that the accord might mark a decisive step towards ending the five-year conflict in South Sudan are inevitably tempered by a legacy of broken ceasefires and failed agreements, which make clear the many challenges that lie ahead in carrying out an ambitious agreement negotiated far from the humanitarian crisis, violence and instability still prevailing across most of the country.

Foremost among those challenges is a profound deficit of trust among almost all of the signatories to the agreement, which will shape a transitional period in which even minor incidents have the potential to cascade and thus jeopardize the fragile truce. The implementation of the agreement's security arrangements will — as in the past — be critical to the success of the agreement, as will efforts to restore the chain of command amidst a multiplying number of armed factions.

The ongoing fragmentation of armed groups is driven in part by disagreement and dissatisfaction with the high-level political negotiations and the resulting peace agreement. A concurrent erosion of the chain of command, especially in the greater Equatoria area, fuelled by local grievances and competition for resources, has already challenged the ceasefire on a number of occasions and may ultimately threaten the agreement itself.

This dynamic has continued to visit violence and humanitarian suffering upon the population of South Sudan. Working closely with counterparts within and outside of the United Nations system, the Panel of Experts on South Sudan observed alarming levels of sexual and gender-based violence, food insecurity and grave human rights abuses, including against children. The ongoing obstruction of humanitarian access has further exacerbated the crisis, while a nearly complete absence of accountability continues to drive cycles of violence, including that directed against humanitarian workers, civil society and journalists. An urgent need to demonstrate tangible impacts from the high-level political process will be central to the credibility and sustainability of any negotiated peace.

While many of the challenges that have undermined previous agreements remain, the regional context in which the agreement will be implemented differs markedly. Sudanese and Ugandan leadership has emerged, supplementing that of Ethiopia, within the Intergovernmental Authority on Development framework, with negotiations taking place against the backdrop of improving regional relations. This has already resulted in increased regional political and security backing for the agreement, while also entrenching the parties' economic interests in South Sudan in ways that may continue to shape the country's political and economic landscape for years to come.

Competition for the country's natural resources is still central to the conflict dynamic at both the local and national levels. Oil remains the dominant source of government revenue, although local competition for access to resources, including gold, hardwood and charcoal, also motivate armed confrontations that can assume national significance given the fragile political and security environment. The Panel detailed cases in which armed groups have profited from teak in both Western and Central Equatoria. Resources, in particular oil, are also increasingly relevant to the regional dynamic, with an increasing number of international companies entering the

sector and a new cooperation agreement bringing Sudanese security forces to help secure and restore production in the Unity oilfields.

In adopting resolution 2428 (2018), the Security Council imposed an arms embargo on the entire territory of South Sudan, while detailing exemptions to the ban in paragraph 5. Increased regional security backing for the peace agreement led the Panel to identify a number of violations of the embargo during the reporting period. The Panel noted repeated violations of the travel ban by several designated individuals and continued to seek the cooperation of regional States and commercial banks to monitor the implementation of the asset freeze.

The present interim report describes the Panel's findings from the first seven weeks of its work, completed in September and October 2018. The reporting period is considerably shorter than that covered in previous interim reports owing to the 45-day mandate established in resolution 2418 (2018), delaying the start of the 2018/19 mandate while leaving the reporting timelines unchanged from the 2017/18 mandate. As a consequence, the Panel by necessity sought to identify, corroborate and report key trends and case studies rather than attempting to carry out a comprehensive analysis of all aspects of its mandate. It will continue to pursue the full implementation of its mandate as defined in the resolution prior to submitting its final report to the Security Council, which is due by 1 May 2019.

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* Circulated in the language of submission only and without formal editing.

Abbreviations

IGAD	Intergovernmental Authority on Development
NAS	National Salvation Front
NGO	non-governmental organization
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
OHCHR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
SPLA	Sudan People's Liberation Army
SPLA-IO	Sudan People's Liberation Army in Opposition
SPLM	Sudan People's Liberation Movement
SPLM-FD	Sudan People's Liberation Movement—Former Detainees
SPLM/A-IO	Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army in Opposition
SPLM-IO	Sudan People's Liberation Movement in Opposition
SSNMC	South Sudan National Movement for Change
SSOA	South Sudan Opposition Alliance
SSPDF	South Sudan People's Defence Forces
UNHCR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNMISS	United Nations Mission in South Sudan

I. Background

A. Mandate and travel

1. By its resolution 2206 (2015), the Security Council imposed a sanctions regime targeting individuals and entities contributing to the conflict in South Sudan and established a sanctions committee (the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 2206 (2015) concerning South Sudan). The Committee designated six individuals for targeted sanctions on 1 July 2015. In adopting resolution 2428 (2018), the Council reiterated that the targeted sanctions measures, consisting of a travel ban and asset freeze, would apply to individuals and/or entities designated by the Committee as responsible for, complicit in or having engaged in, directly or indirectly, actions or policies threatening the peace, security or stability of South Sudan. With that resolution, the Council renewed the sanctions regime until 31 May 2019 and added two persons to the list of designated individuals. It also decided to impose an arms embargo on the entire territory of South Sudan, detailing exemptions in paragraph 5 of the resolution.

2. The Security Council also decided to extend the mandate of the Panel of Experts on South Sudan until 1 July 2019 so that it might provide information and analysis regarding the implementation of the resolution in support of the work of the Committee.

3. On 22 August 2018, the Secretary-General, in consultation with the Committee, appointed the five members of the Panel (see S/2018/776): a natural resources expert (Michael Gibb), an arms expert (Dean Gillespie), a finance expert (Andrei Kolmakov), an expert on humanitarian affairs (Renifa Madenga) and an expert on armed groups and regional issues (Emilio Manfredi). Mr. Gibb was designated to serve as the coordinator of the Panel.

4. Since their appointment, members of the Panel have travelled to France, Kenya, South Sudan, Uganda and the United States of America.

B. Methodology

5. The present report was prepared on the basis of research conducted by the Panel in September and October 2018, as well as a review of documentation made available by the Government of South Sudan, other Member States, regional entities, international organizations and commercial entities. The report also draws on the Panel's earlier work, including previous reports to the Security Council and the Committee, both public and confidential, hundreds of interviews and a large body of other information and evidence provided by a wide range of sources.

6. On 25 July 2018, the Secretary-General notified Member States of the difficult financial situation confronting the Organization and noted that the Secretariat might need to take measures to reduce expenses. In October, the Panel was informed of cuts to its budget, which resulted in a reduction in its ability to execute mandated tasks, including by limiting options for travel. This present report reflects the work that the Panel was able to do within the limits imposed by the reduced budget allocation.

7. Four of the five experts encountered difficulties in obtaining visas for travel to South Sudan, which limited the duration of their stay in the country, while also denying them the opportunity to attend the mandatory security training for travel outside of major cities, further impeding the Panel's ability to operate within South Sudan.

8. The Panel follows the standards recommended by the Informal Working Group of the Security Council on General Issues of Sanctions (S/2006/997), which call for reliance on verified, genuine documents, concrete evidence and on-site observations by experts, including photographs wherever possible. The Panel corroborated the information contained in the present report using multiple independent sources to meet the appropriate evidentiary standard.

9. The Panel conducted its work with the greatest possible transparency, while remaining cognizant of the need to protect confidentiality. A source or document is described as confidential when its disclosure could compromise the safety of the source or ongoing Panel investigations.

C. Cooperation with international organizations and other stakeholders

10. While the Panel operates independently of United Nations agencies and institutions, it wishes to express its gratitude to the leadership and personnel of UNMISS and other United Nations staff in Entebbe, Uganda, Nairobi and New York for their invaluable support.

11. During the initial months of its mandate, the Panel consulted extensively with the Member States concerned, international, regional and subregional organizations and UNMISS, further to paragraph 18 of resolution 2428 (2018), in which the Council emphasizes the importance of the Panel holding consultations with those entities.

12. The Panel met the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of UNMISS, the Mission's Force Commander and Police Commissioner and representatives of the UNMISS Human Rights and Political Affairs Divisions, Women's Protection Unit, the Gender Affairs Unit, UNICEF, UNHCR and the Mine Action Service of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations in South Sudan. The Panel also consulted with the Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission and the Ceasefire and Transitional Security Arrangements Monitoring and Verification Mechanism.

13. The Panel also met diplomatic representatives of the African Union, Belgium, China, the Dominican Republic, Ethiopia, France, Germany, Kenya, Kuwait, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, the Russian Federation, South Africa, South Sudan, Uganda, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America.

II. Conflict dynamics update

A. Implementation of the peace agreement

14. At the thirty-third extraordinary summit of Heads of State and Government of IGAD member States, held in Addis Ababa on 12 September 2018, Salva Kiir, the President of South Sudan, signed a peace agreement with Riek Machar Teny, leader of SPLM/A-IO and representatives of other rebel factions, namely, SPLM-FD, a faction of SSOA, the Umbrella of Political Parties, the National Alliance of Political Parties, the United Sudan African Party, the United Democratic Salvation Front, the United Democratic Party and the African National Congress.

15. The new accord, the "Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan" (hereinafter referred to as the revitalized peace agreement), is aimed at ending the hostilities that broke out in 2016 following the collapse of the 2015 Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan. The new

agreement was brokered by the President of the Sudan, Omer Hassan Al-Bashir, with the President of Uganda, Yoweri Museveni, and other IGAD leaders.

16. Negotiated against a background of attrition, fatigue, depleted resources and the ongoing inability of any party to decisively defeat the opposing side militarily, the Panel considers the revitalized peace agreement to be a potentially positive step towards resolving the conflict in South Sudan.[1] A number of challenges in implementing the ambitious agreement in a very tight time frame lie ahead, however, namely:

(a) There is a serious deficit of trust and confidence among signatories at all levels, with the potential for political or military incidents to further erode trust during the implementation phase;

(b) The implementation of the wide-ranging and ambitious agreement has already fallen behind schedule, creating further friction and distrust;

(c) The continued fragmentation of armed groups, including some signatories to the agreement, has resulted in armed splinter groups refusing to take part in the peace talks and challenging the validity of the agreement, asserting that the root causes of the conflict remain unaddressed. Such forces include General Thomas Cirillo's NAS and other elements of SSOA[2] and a faction of SSNMC;[3]

(d) Armed elements within SPLA-IO are voicing increased concern with the agreement, especially those in the greater Equatoria region. The Panel has identified various field commanders who seem unresponsive to instructions coming from their national political and military leadership and, in some cases, who fail to respect established chains of command. This has led to armed confrontations, including breaches of the ceasefire.[4] In the Panel's assessment, there is a potential for a division within the main opposition camp;

(e) SSPDF[5] continued to perpetrate attacks on civilians, in areas including Unity, Warrap and Western Equatoria.[6] The Panel has also received allegations of SSPDF attacks on the positions of SPLA-IO and other opposition forces, including in Central Equatoria and Wau,[7] since the signing of the revitalized peace agreement.[8]

17. The Transitional Government of National Unity agreed to implement a number of confidence-building measures immediately upon the signing of the revitalized peace agreement. Most of those measures have yet to be fully implemented, including:

(a) The lifting of the state of emergency;

(b) The release of all remaining political prisoners, including senior rebel leaders;

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[1] Based on interviews with political and military representatives of the Transitional Government of National Unity, SPLA-IO, SSOA, members of South Sudanese civil society and international observers, in Juba, Kampala and Nairobi, September and October 2018.

[2] Interviews with senior representatives of SSOA and civil society in Kampala and Nairobi, September and October 2018.

[3] Interviews with senior representatives of NAS, SSNMC and SSOA in Kampala, Nairobi and the United States and telephone interviews, September and October 2018. See *Sudan Tribune*, "South Sudan's NAS leader says not committed to the ceasefire agreement", 23 September 2018.

[4] Interviews with confidential sources.

[5] By Presidential Order No. 18/2018, 2 October 2018, SPLA was renamed SSPDF. The Panel refers to South Sudanese forces as SSPDF throughout the present report.

[6] Interviews with members of South Sudanese civil society, community leaders/elders and international observers.

[7] Created by Establishment Order No. 36/2015.

[8] Interviews with confidential sources.

(c) The release of all prisoners of war.[9]

18. The failure to implement those measures has been cited as one of the factors impeding the return to Juba of former rebel forces and signatories to the revitalized peace agreement.[10]

19. A permanent ceasefire was agreed under the Agreement on Cessation of Hostilities, Protection of Civilians and Humanitarian Access, signed on 21 December 2017 and reiterated on 21 June 2018, at the thirty-second extraordinary summit on South Sudan of Heads of State and Government of IGAD member States and again on 12 September 2018 in the revitalized peace agreement.

20. The Panel investigated multiple alleged ceasefire violations committed by armed groups, including SSPDF, SPLA-IO and forces allied to non-signatories to the revitalized peace agreement. The Panel was able to verify the following incidents:

(a) In Central Equatoria:

- Clashes between SSPDF, with support from allied militias, and rebels under the command of SPLA-IO, in Mangalatore and Mundu, Yei River State,[11] on 14 and 15 September
- Clashes between SPLA-IO and NAS armed elements Jamara and Mundu, Lainya County, Yei River State, between 24 and 28 September
- Clashes between SSPDF and SPLA-IO in the Mundu area, Lainya County, on 24 September
- Clashes between SPLA-IO and NAS in Logo and Minyori on 15 October

(b) In Unity State, clashes between elements of SSPDF Division 4, under the command of Major General Samsom Mabior Lual, and SPLA-IO forces in the Kuok, Mirmir and Ngony areas of Koch County on 24 and 25 September;

(c) In Western Bahr el-Ghazal, clashes in Ngisa, Ngoku and Tado between SSPDF and SPLA-IO between 3 and 15 October.[12]

21. A further key to the success and sustainability of the revitalized peace agreement is the eight-month pre-transitional period (articles 1.1.2 and 2.2). During that period, the National Pre-transitional Committee is mandated to oversee and coordinate a range of measures to be undertaken in collaboration with the incumbent Transitional Government of National Unity (article 1.4.7). The committee is chaired by Tut Kew Gatluak (Transitional Government of National Unity) and comprises five members of

[9] The Transitional Government of National Unity released 24 political prisoners on 19 October and 5 on 25 October. President Kiir committed to releasing an additional two political prisoners on 31 October. See Associated Press, "Red Cross assists in key prisoner release in South Sudan", 19 October 2018; Reuters, "South Sudan frees five political detainees: intelligence agency", 25 October 2018; and *The East African*, "Kiir Frees Two Political Prisoners", 31 October 2018.

[10] On 31 October 2018, SPLA-IO leader Machar returned to Juba but departed for Khartoum the same day.

[11] Created by Establishment Order No. 36/2015.

[12] Interviews with senior representatives of the Transitional Government of National Unity, SPLA-IO, SSOA, NAS, South Sudanese civil society and media outlets, community leaders and elders and international observers, in Juba, Kampala and Nairobi, September and October 2018.

the Transitional Government of National Unity, with the other five members divided among SPLM-IO and other opposition forces.[13]

22. Despite their having been appointed on schedule, only one of the members selected by opposition parties (Deng Alor Kuol, representing Former Detainees) had relocated to Juba. The remaining four stated that they did not yet feel that it was safe to return to the capital.[14] As a result, the committee is not yet fully operational. Moreover, very limited progress was made with respect to other key provisions scheduled for implementation within the first 45 days of the adoption of the revitalized peace agreement. They are to be completed prior to the establishment of the Revitalized Transitional Government of National Unity, which will serve a term of 36 months (article 2.3.1).

23. The implementation of the security provisions will be crucial during that period. The Panel saw little evidence of tangible progress towards the separation and cantonment of the armed forces of the signatories to the revitalized peace agreement, scheduled to occur within 30 days of the signing of the agreement (article 2.2.2). This will in turn most likely cause a delay in the reorganization, training and redeployment of new "unified forces" in the pre-transitional period (article 2.2.1).[15]

24. The Panel is of the view that incentives to maintain the war economy remain a significant impediment to stability at both the national and local levels. As detailed in the case study on Central Equatoria and the sections discussing teak and gold, the objective of controlling those resources appears, in many cases, to prevail over a genuine desire to govern. As noted in the case study, several sources within armed groups observed that weak chains of command left significant room for field commanders to make their own tactical and operational decisions in pursuit of those aims.[16]

B. Case study on Central Equatoria

25. Perhaps nowhere in South Sudan are the challenges that await the implementation of the revitalized peace agreement as apparent as in Central Equatoria. A study of the conflict dynamics in the region offers insight into many of the currents that run counter to the success of the agreement.

26. Shaped in part by the failure of previous agreements, the proliferation of armed groups in Central Equatoria illustrates an emerging gap between the political and military leadership of several armed groups, as well as the growing differences between the national and local elements within them. At the same time, the Panel also observed a countervailing current, resulting from dissatisfaction with the national

[13] *Sudan Tribune*, "President Kiir appoints South Sudan pre-transitional body", 27 September 2018, reports the 10 members as Tut Kew Gatluak, Transitional Government of National Unity (Chair); Henry Odwuor, SPLM-IO (Deputy Chair); Gabriel Changson, SSOA (Deputy Chair); Martin Elia Lomuro, Transitional Government of National Unity (Secretary); Michael Makuei Lueth, Transitional Government of National Unity; Dhieu Mathok Diing, Transitional Government of National Unity; Awut Deng Achuil, Transitional Government of National Unity; Deng Alor Kuol, Former Detainees; Puot Kang, SPLM-IO; and Peter Mayen Majongdit, other political parties.

[14] Interviews with senior SPLA-IO and SSOA representatives, South Sudanese civil society, in Juba, Kampala and Nairobi, September and October 2018.

[15] Interviews with senior representatives of the Transitional Government of National Unity, SPLA-IO and various SSOA factions, South Sudanese civil society and international observers in Juba, Kampala and Nairobi, September and October 2018.

[16] Interviews with South Sudanese civil society, community leaders and elders, representatives of the Transitional Government of National Unity, SPLA-IO, other armed groups and international observers, in Juba, Kampala and Nairobi, September and October 2018.

political process, pulling some of those armed elements together along an Equatorian identity.[17]

27. Since 2015, Central Equatoria has become an increasingly significant front in the national conflict, meaning that local incidents, such as ceasefire violations, can quickly assume national significance and imperil the precarious agreement.

28. SSPDF and allied militias retain control of major towns and villages in Central Equatoria, including Kajo Kaji, Lainya and Morobo. They have also been trying to reassert their presence on connecting roads. In so doing, they have carried out acts of brutality against the civilian population, who are routinely accused of supporting rebels.[18]

29. The areas surrounding those towns are largely under the contested control of a swelling number of other armed groups. The agendas of their field commanders are often driven by local interests and shaped by ethnic tensions and personal gain rather than by a national political or military strategy.[19] Consequently, they have shown an increased willingness to resist established chains of command in pursuit of those local agendas.

30. A key ambition of armed groups and their commanders has been access to and control of resources, the most significant of which are hardwood and gold, although access to food and crops has also been contested. Control of roads and transportation routes, particularly near the border with Uganda, is also sought.[20] Personal reliance on gains from the war economy threaten to outweigh any potential peace dividends for local commanders and armed groups.

31. While ostensibly united at the national level, SPLM/A-IO appears increasingly to be divided militarily in Central Equatoria, principally along ethnic lines. Some Nuer "mobile forces", such as the several hundred or so fighters stationed between Kajo Kaji and Morobo under the command of Major General John Mabie Gar (Nuer), remained in the region after the 2015 cantonment process and Riek Machar's flight from Juba to the Democratic Republic of the Congo in July 2016. Those elements, however, appear to no longer operate in concert with the SPLA-IO forces that have been recruited locally.

32. Local SPLA-IO armed groups were recruited mainly following the signature in August 2015 of the Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan in an attempt to populate bases allocated to SPLA-IO in the region, and later when fighting broke out in July 2016. Local anger towards the Government of President Kiir had grown by that point, with Equatorians accusing the Government of failing to deliver on its promise of "real federalism" and improved power-sharing among the tribes of South Sudan.[21]

33. These local SPLA-IO units, which are themselves divided, often along ethnic lines, with little in the way of a long-term political or military strategy uniting them, include:

[17] Interviews with confidential sources.

[18] Telephone interviews with South Sudanese civil society, Central Equatoria community leaders and elders, in Juba, Kampala and Nairobi, September and October 2018.

[19] Telephone interviews with representatives of South Sudanese civil society, SSPDF, SPLA-IO, NAS and SSNMC and Central Equatoria community leaders and elders, in Juba, Kampala and Nairobi, September and October 2018.

[20] Ibid., and interviews with police representatives with knowledge of the border, in Juba, Kampala and Nairobi, September and October 2018.

[21] Interviews with Central Equatoria community leaders and elders, representatives of civil society organizations, SPLA-IO and NAS, in Juba, Kampala and Nairobi, September and October 2018.

(a) A Kakwa group led by Colonel Emmanuel Gadi, whom the Panel assesses was responsible for one recent ceasefire violation when he aimed to retake areas around Minyori, Yei River State,[22] from a predominantly Pojulu armed group led by General Abraham Wani;

(b) A Kakwa group led by Commander Elbuiros Erasto Yetta;

(c) A Kakwa group led by Commander Ramadan Asike;

(d) A Kuku group led by the Governor of Yei River State, General Frank Elikana Matata, appointed by SPLA-IO and directed in the field by General Moses Lokujo.[23]

34. The Panel identified a number of NAS and SSNMC factions present in Central Equatoria. Their divisions originated in a disagreement over whether to accept the revitalized peace agreement, as well as local enmities. They include:

(a) The main NAS force, loyal to General Thomas Cirillo Swaka (Bari), a former SSPDF Deputy Chief of Staff who resigned in 2017 and became the leader of NAS, which is part of SSOA. Some factions within SSOA, including a NAS group, signed the revitalized peace agreement, whereas General Cirillo leads NAS and SSOA factions that have refused to sign the accord (see annex I);

(b) A force under the control of Khalid Butroes (an ethnic Moru from Meridi), which appears to be in favour of the revitalized peace agreement;

(c) A force under the control of General John Kenyi Lebron (an ethnic Pojulu), a former SPLA-IO commander who defected to General Cirillo's NAS but who now seems to be acting alone and whose position on the revitalized peace agreement is not clear.[24]

35. The Panel identified the following SSNMC armed factions present in Central Equatoria:

(a) A faction supportive of the revitalized peace agreement, led by Joseph Bangasi Bakasero (an ethnic Azande from Western Equatoria), and led in Central Equatoria by Major General Joseph Alessandro Mule, Major General Elias Laki Jada, General Bakindi Unvuas and Major Wesley Wabula (Pojulu and Mundari) (see annex I);

(b) A faction controlled by General Abraham Wani (Pojulu).[25]

36. This governance vacuum has had a devastating impact on civilians, many of whom have been driven into the bush or to makeshift camps in Uganda.[26] It has also resulted in a number of ceasefire violations.

C. Regional developments and context

37. The revitalized peace agreement was negotiated and signed against the backdrop of a growing regional détente in the Horn of Africa region. This includes the emergence of peace between Eritrea and Ethiopia, talks that engaged a broader range

[22] Created by Establishment Order No. 36/2015.

[23] Riek Machar suspended Frank Matata from the governorship on 21 October (see annex I).

[24] Interviews with NAS factions in Kampala and telephone interview, October 2018.

[25] Telephone interviews with South Sudanese civil society, SSPDF, SPLA-IO, NAS, SSNMC representatives, Central Equatoria community leaders and elders, in Juba, Kampala and Nairobi, September and October 2018.

[26] Telephone interviews with South Sudanese civil society, Central Equatoria community leaders and elders and South Sudanese refugees living in Uganda, in Juba, Kampala and Nairobi, September and October 2018.

of regional stakeholders in the leadership of the peace process and an increasingly harmonious dialogue among countries in the region.

38. This backdrop illustrates the way in which the current regional context contrasts with the situation at the time of the implementation of the former peace agreement, where equivalent political and security backing from the region was lacking. Such positive regional developments may therefore have greater potential to guarantee and sustain the implementation of the agreement. It is, however, still unclear whether that regional support will become sufficiently institutionalized to endure beyond the short term.

39. A significant economic dimension has also emerged with respect to regional engagement in the peace process in South Sudan. While not necessarily detrimental to the process, the economic dimension may feature more prominently in the strategic thinking of neighbouring States during the pre-transitional and transitional periods.

40. The Panel takes note of the decisions of the IGAD chiefs of staff at their meeting held on 22 October 2018 in Khartoum. The signatories agreed to compose a team to assess the security situation and the tasks of the UNMISS Regional Protection Force in South Sudan, in accordance with the communiqué of the thirty-third extraordinary summit of IGAD, held on 12 September 2018. The communiqué stated that IGAD should engage the Security Council to ensure that the Regional Protection Force is fully deployed to execute its mandate in accordance with resolutions 2304 (2016) and 2406 (2018) and should request a further review of the mandate to allow the Sudan, Uganda, Djibouti and Somalia as guarantors, to contribute forces to enhance protection and security throughout the implementation of the revitalized peace agreement.

41. The Panel notes that the arms embargo established by the Security Council in its resolution 2428 (2018), including its exemption procedures and process, will be relevant to the deployment of any such force in the territory of South Sudan.

III. Violations of international humanitarian and human rights law

42. Despite high-level political progress, it is clear that peace, security and justice have yet to reach the vast majority of the civilian population of South Sudan. The ongoing and immeasurable suffering of civilians has been well documented in numerous United Nations and third-party reports, including in the Western Equatoria region, where a surge of violence between SPLA-IO (Machar) and SSPDF forces led to a number of deaths and 887 reported abductions and forced 24,000 to flee their homes between April and August 2018.[27]

43. The members of the Panel visited protection of civilian site 3 in Juba in October and spoke with a number of individuals representing communities and constituencies at the site. According to the community leaders, the camp houses about 39,000 internally displaced persons and is served by a single clinic; severely inadequate sanitary conditions have led to a spike in disease and child mortality. Food shortages are exacerbated by the obstruction of deliveries. Sources with first-hand knowledge confirmed that food supplies are sometimes inadequate because some registered recipients share rations with off-site family members.

44. Women daily face insecurity and violence. Various women described to the Panel their responsibility for gathering firewood, the supply of which is all but

[27] OHCHR and UNMISS, "Violations and abuses against civilians in Gbudue and Tambura States (Western Equatoria), April–August 2018", 18 October 2018.

exhausted within the camp itself and in the 1-km United Nations-patrolled weapons-free zone that surrounds it. This has increasingly forced women to venture further from the relative safety of the camp in search of essential household fuel. The Panel heard serious allegations of rape and abduction targeting those women, and it is further investigating and verifying details, including the identity and affiliation of the perpetrators, as well as other reported cases (see S/2018/831, paras. 37 and 38). It will advise the Committee of its findings in its final report.

45. Most of the residents with whom the Panel spoke had lived on the site since 2013 and saw no end in sight, as their homes had been either destroyed or occupied. All expressed deep distrust of the revitalized peace agreement, citing a recent history littered with failed agreements and broken promises and a high-level political process that is far removed from lives dominated by anger, trauma, profound conflict fatigue and desperate living conditions. They called for accountability, particularly with respect to sexual violence, food and security and stability.

A. Use and recruitment of children

46. Further to paragraph 7 (e) of resolution 2206 (2015), as reiterated in paragraph 14 (f) of resolution 2428 (2018), the Panel has previously addressed the grave violations against children, which include the use and recruitment of children in conflict (see S/2018/292, paras. 40 and 46). The Panel has been monitoring the situation of children in South Sudan closely, including since the ratification by South Sudan on 27 September 2018 of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict.

47. The forced recruitment of children by SPLA-IO (Machar) was reported for the period April–August 2018.[28] The Panel is also verifying additional allegations received during its visit to South Sudan in October, including the case of some 3,000 missing children.[29]

B. Food insecurity

48. Malnutrition and food shortages were highlighted as matters of ongoing and serious concern by the international presence in Juba,[30] with impediments to humanitarian access, including risks to the security of humanitarian actors, cited as one of the key obstacles to addressing growing food insecurity, especially in parts of Western Bahr el-Ghazal, Western Equatoria, Upper Nile and Unity.[31]

49. Residents of protection of civilians site 3, near Juba, also impressed upon the Panel the serious inadequacy of food supplies.[32] Food shortages were cited as one of the key obstacles to the voluntary and dignified repatriation, rehabilitation and resettlement of people sheltering in protection of civilians sites.[33]

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[28] OHCHR and UNMISS, "Violations and abuses against civilians in Gbudue and Tambura States (Western Equatoria)".

[29] Interviews with three confidential sources working directly with children affected by the armed conflict in South Sudan, in Juba, October 2018.

[30] Interviews with confidential sources, in Juba, October 2018. Sources working with humanitarian organizations active in South Sudan.

[31] Ibid.; see also UNICEF, South Sudan Humanitarian Situation Report, 1–30 September 2018, and Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, South Sudan: Humanitarian Dashboard (as of 30 September 2018), 12 October 2018.

[32] Interviews with 25 community leaders and elders (20 men, 5 women), protection of civilians site 3, near Juba, October 2018.

[33] Interview, confidential source, in Juba, October 2018.

C. Sexual and gender-based violence

50. The Panel remains extremely concerned about the continued levels of conflict-related sexual violence and sexual and gender-based violence in South Sudan, despite the peace processes and the commitments made by the parties.[34] The Panel notes that by paragraph 14 (e) of its resolution 2428 (2018), the Security Council introduced a specific designation criteria for the planning, directing or commission of acts involving sexual and gender-based violence in South Sudan.

51. UNMISS and OHCHR recently reported corroborated accounts by victims and witnesses of women and girls as young as 12 years having been abducted by opposition forces and paraded for commanders to choose as "wives". The UNMISS Human Rights Division identified three SPLA-IO (Machar) commanders who had effective command and control of the forces committing offences during this period.[35] The Panel also takes note of the statements of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, particularly on the use of sexual violence as a weapon of war in South Sudan, with specific reference to command responsibility for alleged violations in Unity State.[36]

52. The Panel continued to engage with relevant agencies and arranged further field missions to continue its investigations, specifically into sexual and gender-based violence.

D. Obstruction of humanitarian assistance

53. With reference to paragraph 2 of resolution 2428 (2018), the Panel notes that humanitarian access continues to be restricted across South Sudan by all parties to the conflict, as well as civilian authorities and criminal networks.[37]

54. Humanitarian aid workers continue to be targets for looting and violence across the country, with incidents reported in Central Equatoria, Jonglei and Eastern Equatoria in August.[38] The Panel is also investigating recent reports that growing insecurity in the Equatorias, as explored in a case study on Central Equatoria, is impeding safe access for partners.[39]

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[34] Both President Kiir and SPLM/A-IO leader Machar signed, on 11 October 2014 and 18 December 2014, respectively, a communiqué on the prevention of and response to conflict-related sexual violence, consistent with the requirements of resolution 2106 (2013). SSPDF and the South Sudan National Police Service have been listed in the Secretary-General's annual report on conflict-related sexual violence since 2014. The SPLM/A-IO (Machar) and (Deng), the Justice and Equality Movement and the Lord's Resistance Army active in South Sudan are also listed 2018 (S/2018/250, annex).

[35] OHCHR and UNMISS, "Violations and abuses against civilians in Gbudue and Tambura States".

[36] Statement by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, Pramila Patten, to the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 2206 (2015) concerning South Sudan (24 October 2018).

[37] Interviews with United Nations sources, including from the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, Juba, October 2018. See also UNICEF, South Sudan Humanitarian Situation Report, 1–30 September 2018.

[38] See UNICEF, South Sudan Humanitarian Situation Report, 1–30 September 2018.

[39] Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, South Sudan Humanitarian Access Snapshot, August 2018.

E. Accountability

55. Ongoing impunity and the absence of meaningful accountability was highlighted as a significant contributor to the conflict dynamic by both international interlocutors and individuals directly affected by the conflict.[40]

56. The creation of a hybrid court for South Sudan was mentioned again in the revitalized peace agreement, but the Panel notes that relevant language from the original peace agreement relating to the court was not replicated precisely in the revitalized peace agreement. In particular, while the former peace agreement (chap. V, article 3.1.1) mandated the court to investigate and prosecute individuals bearing responsibility for violations of international law and/or applicable South Sudanese law, the revitalized peace agreement (chap. V, article 5.3.1.1) mandates this only "where necessary". Several sources suggested that this language might interfere or undermine with the work of the court.[41]

IV. Arms and implementation of the arms embargo

57. It is the Panel's preliminary assessment that there are substantial stockpiles of military equipment available to SSPDF and allied militias across the country, predominantly at sector and division commands. There are, however, indications that SSPDF may have limited capacity to prosecute sustained offensive operations across the country owing to a limited ability to purchase and restock ammunition.[42]

58. Some reports indicate that SPLA-IO (Machar) forces, in at least parts of the country, have had their traditional supply chains disrupted, and consequently experienced a shortage of arms and ammunition. In some cases there are more personnel than weapons available.[43]

59. The Panel started the process of monitoring the arms embargo established by resolution 2428 (2018). While it is too early to adequately assess its impact and enforcement, a number of violations have been noted by the Panel.

60. The Panel notes that both South Sudan and the Sudan have agreed to the deployment of Sudanese Armed Forces personnel in Unity State, as announced by the two Governments on 7 June 2018. This deployment, aimed at protecting oilfields and oil production, falls under the South Sudan/Sudan "joint oil protection force". The Panel received documents, dated in the latter half of June 2018, detailing that arrangement, including an agreement that the "escort team" for fast-track facilitation of petroleum-related materials at the border shall not exceed one platoon from both sides.[44] The Panel confirmed that Sudanese Armed Forces had been deployed in South Sudan since the agreement was reached.[45]

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[40] Based on meeting with confidential sources working on the rule of law in South Sudan, October 2018, in Juba; meeting with 25 community leaders, protection of civilians site 3, October 2018.

[41] Interviews with South Sudanese civil society, international human rights and humanitarian experts, in Juba, Kampala and Nairobi, September and October 2018.

[42] Interviews with confidential source in SSPDF, senior official, UNMISS staff and as international observer, in Juba, September–October 2018.

[43] Ibid.

[44] Confidential document on file with the Panel.

[45] Interviews with confidential sources, including Sudanese and South Sudanese officials, a SSPDF source, South Sudanese opposition groups and international observers in South Sudan with relevant first-hand knowledge.

61. During the reporting period, the Panel verified the presence of armed personnel of the Uganda People's Defence Forces inside the territory of South Sudan, notably in Central and Eastern Equatoria.[46]

62. The Panel is in the process of examining the activities of foreign private security companies operating in Juba to provide security training to the South Sudan National Police Service and SSPDF.[47]

63. The Panel notes that exemptions are available to the arms embargo under paragraph 5 of resolution 2428 (2018). One query and one incomplete exemption notification/request concerning the arms embargo have reached the Committee. In follow-up correspondence, the Panel was informed that the proposed training activity had not included SSPDF personnel. At the time of writing, no other communications regarding the arms embargo had been received by the Committee.

64. The Panel is verifying other allegations of the transport of weapons into South Sudan in violation of the arms embargo. In this connection, the Panel notes that by paragraphs 7 to 10 of resolution 2428 (2018), the Security Council urged Member States to take action to identify and prevent such arms shipments, including by inspecting, in accordance with relevant domestic and international law, all cargo destined for South Sudan in their territory, including seaports and airports, where there are reasonable grounds to believe that the cargo contains items prohibited by paragraph 4 of the resolution. With reference to paragraph 10, the Panel notes that, to date, the Committee has received no inspection reports.

V. Illicit exploitation of natural resources and misappropriation of revenues

65. Further to paragraph 14 (j) of resolution 2428 (2018), concerning armed groups or criminal networks that destabilize South Sudan through the illicit exploitation of or trade in natural resources, and with regard to paragraph 15 of the resolution, in which the Security Council expresses concern about the misappropriation and diversion of public resources which pose a risk to the peace, security and stability of South Sudan, the Panel has been investigating the exploitation of oil, gold, timber and other resources in the country.

A. Oil revenues

66. The South Sudan 2018/19 draft national budget makes clear the continued dependence of the country's economy on oil revenues. The estimated net oil revenues account for almost 90 per cent of total budgeted revenues.[48] Current production estimates are between 100,000 and 130,000 barrels of crude oil per day.[49]

67. In the context of the Khartoum Declaration of Agreement between Parties of the Conflict of South Sudan, signed on 27 June 2018 (S/2018/641, annex) and the

[46] Interviews with confidential sources, in Juba and Kampala, October 2018.

[47] Telephone interview, confidential source, September 2018.

[48] Budget speech for 2018/19 delivered to Transitional National Legislature by Salvatore Garang Mabiordit, Minister of Finance and Economic Planning, 12 July 2018. A total budget of 80.451 billion South Sudanese pounds (SSP) was estimated for the year. Net oil revenues available for the budget were estimated at SSP 71.800 billion. Non-oil revenues were estimated to total SSP 25.056 billion, implying a lower proportion of oil revenues.

[49] Ezekiel Lol Gatkuoth, Minister of Petroleum and Mining, South Sudan, presentation to the 2018 Africa Oil & Power conference, entitled "State of the Industry", Cape Town, South Africa, 5–7 September 2018. The budget speech for 2018/19 cites a production figure of 127,000 barrels per day.

revitalized peace agreement, the Government has set ambitious targets to increase oil production and accompanying revenues.[50] As noted elsewhere in the present report, mistrust is one of the key challenges to the implementation of the revitalized peace agreement. The management of government revenues, in particular oil revenues, will be an important factor in building confidence between the parties. Ambitious governance and transparency reforms are therefore outlined in chapter 4.8 of the agreement.

68. The Khartoum Declaration, adopted prior to the signing of the revitalized peace agreement, features, in paragraph 5, a lengthy discussion of oilfields (blocks 1, 2, 4 and 5A) in the Unity region. The Declaration states that the Government of South Sudan, in collaboration with the Government of the Sudan, "shall immediately rehabilitate the oilfields identified above, and others as would be agreed upon, for the resumption and the restoration of the previous levels of oil production". This included the deployment of the South Sudan/Sudan joint oil protection force, as described in section IV above.

69. A number of payments to the Government of the Sudan were negotiated as part of the Khartoum Declaration, emphasizing the regional economic dimension of the ongoing peace process. A compensation payment is to be made by the Government of South Sudan to the Government of the Sudan for damage done to the Heglig facility during fighting in 2012.[51] Reports also indicate that the transit fees payable to the Sudan for production in fields 1, 2, and 4 have been increased from $11[52] to $14 per barrel, to be applied retroactively to July 2011, adding to the outstanding transit fees of South Sudan.[53] South Sudan indicated a commitment to clearing all outstanding transit fees owed to the Sudan, as well as the payment of 28,000 barrels of crude oil per day against an outstanding debt of $1.3 billion incurred under the transitional financial arrangement.[54]

70. Early reports suggest that 20,000 barrels per day have been produced in the Toma South oilfields since September 2018.[55] In addition to any production increase, the Government of South Sudan also stands to benefit from potential signing bonuses and forward sales of crude oil.

71. In September 2018, it was announced that existing oil exploration and production agreements with international oil companies had been extended by a period of six years and eight months in blocks 1, 2 and 4.[56] The Panel is seeking to identify whether any signing bonuses or other fees were paid as part of that agreement.

72. In July 2018, the Ministry of Petroleum and Mining of South Sudan announced that it was terminating licencing talks with the oil company Total, which had

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[50] In his presentation to the 2018 Africa Oil & Power conference, the Minister of Petroleum and Mining cited a target production figure of 280,000 barrels per day.

[51] Joint communiqué from the Minister of Petroleum and Gas of the Sudan and the Minister of Petroleum and Mining of South Sudan, Khartoum, 26 June 2018.

[52] Press release, Ministry of Petroleum and Mining of South Sudan, *South Sudan to Restart Oil Production*, 6 August 2012.

[53] Sudan Tribune, *Foreign Firms to Pay Sudan $14 per barrel as transit fees for South Sudan*, 19 September 2018. For prior transit fees, see Marketing Reports, produced by the Ministry of Petroleum and Mining of South Sudan, for the years 2012/13, 2013/14 and 2014/15.

[54] Budget speech for 2018/19.

[55] In his presentation to the 2018 Africa Oil & Power conference, the Minister of Petroleum and Mining of South Sudan confirmed that Toma South production was back on stream. Industry press have cited figures of 20,000 barrels per day. See, for example, OilPrice.com, "South Sudan restarts oil production at major oil field", 27 August 2018; and Reuters, "South Sudan expects to return to peak oil output of 350,000 bpd by mid-2019", 5 September 2018.

[56] Reuters, "South Sudan signs extends oil exploration, production deals for 3 blocks", 10 September 2018.

previously held a licence for block B.[57] The block was split into three parts. Oranto Petroleum was awarded block B3 in 2017.[58] The Panel has some indications that the agreement was accompanied by a substantial signing bonus.[59] The Government is also actively looking for investors in blocks B1 and B2, as well as additional buyers for its crude oil exports.

73. Oil advances also appear to be an ongoing source of government revenues. The budget statement for 2018/19 noted that the Government's resources during the third quarter (January–March 2018) had been boosted by two oil advances, as well as the payment of oil signature bonuses.

74. A number of new trading companies have entered the market for South Sudanese crude oil in recent months, and the Panel is engaging with those companies pursuant to paragraph 15 of resolution 2428 (2018).

75. The Panel is aware of a number of instances in which purchase agreements have been accompanied by prepayment agreements, which have specified not only advance payments to South Sudan, but also ordered direct transfers to third-party companies, typically as payment for goods and services, such as refined fuel products.[60] Such diversions are not necessarily misappropriations, but they do significantly reduce oversight and transparency over the use of the country's oil revenues. Such practices thereby increase the risk of misappropriation or diversion, while also potentially undermining or circumventing power-sharing and oversight mechanisms designed to build trust and confidence between parties to the peace agreement.

76. Article 4.8.1.10 of the revitalized peace agreement further stipulates that all revenues for South Sudanese oil should be paid directly into the oil revenue account at the Bank of South Sudan before withdrawals can be approved by the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning. The same requirement is present in chapter 2 of the Petroleum Revenue Management Act of South Sudan, the full implementation of which is called for in article 4.8.1.1 of the revitalized peace agreement.

B. Timber

77. Further to its 2018 final report (S/2018/292), the Panel continued its investigations into the use of teak as a source of financing for armed groups, including SSPDF and SPLA-IO.

78. Most of the country's teak is concentrated in the Equatorias, with the largest concessions located in Central Equatoria and smaller ones in Western Equatoria, which are largely under government control. The conflict dynamic and the proliferation of armed groups in this part of the country have significantly reduced the space for the operation of a formal teak industry, creating the conditions for illicit and informal trade that offers armed groups and government forces potential revenues through the illegal taxation, harvesting and transport of timber. As noted in the Central Equatoria case study, access to natural resources, including teak, is shaping the behaviour of local commanders in ways that may diverge from the orders of their national leadership. In the current volatile and fragile context, competition for resources such as teak can assume significance beyond their absolute material value.

[57] Ministry of Petroleum and Mining of South Sudan, "South Sudan: press statement on Total to exit South Sudan petroleum license talks", 25 July 2018.

[58] Minister of Petroleum and Mining of South Sudan, presentation to the 2018 Africa Oil & Power conference. See also interview with the Minister in S&P Global Platts, "Interview: South Sudan turns to China to develop key blocks after Total walks", 10 September 2018.

[59] Interview, confidential source.

[60] Interviews with confidential sources, and documents on file with the Panel.

79. Statistics from the International Tropical Timber Organization indicate that teak export figures for the first nine months of 2018 from South Sudan, the Sudan and Uganda totalled 78,206 m^3. Industry experts have told the Panel that the vast majority of those exports likely originated in South Sudan.[61]

80. Prices vary considerably with the quality and type of teak, but range from $350 to $900 per m^3 of timber at market in Uganda, which is the principal destination of timber harvested in the Equatorias. Exports travel by road, often via the Democratic Republic of the Congo, before entering Uganda. Asia is the principal onward export destination for timber from the region.[62]

81. The Panel was unable to confirm the profits and shares available to participants in the South Sudan teak industry, as they appear to vary considerably. Rough estimates obtained by the Panel suggest that sums ranging from about $150 to $200 per m^3 of exported timber are shared among local residents harvesting teak, traders and financiers, local officials and licencing authorities and individuals providing armed protection, including, in some locations, from SSPDF and SPLA-IO. Additional payments may also be made for transport and border crossings. A rough estimate of the total value of the South Sudan teak industry may be in the range of $10 million to $11 million per year.[63]

82. The Panel received credible information indicating that opposition groups, in particular the SPLA-IO faction controlled by John Mohammado Sabadari and James Nando operating in Western Equatoria, have benefited through taxation and protection payments.[64] The Panel also saw credible evidence that the teak trade in Central Equatoria had benefited at least one faction of SPLA-IO stationed there.[65] Given the significant quantities of teak in Central Equatoria, the Panel intends to further investigate the trade.

83. Additional revenues have also been generated by attacks on convoys transporting teak for export.[66] On 25 May, near Mangenzi in Western Equatoria, a truck carrying teak logs was attacked and looted by armed elements. On 19 June, a convoy of four trucks on the same road was ambushed, a driver was killed and teak was again looted.

C. Gold

84. The illicit exploitation of and trade in gold continues to benefit Government forces and armed groups in gold-producing areas of South Sudan, particularly in the Equatorias. As with teak, access to gold-producing areas in Central and Eastern Equatoria has shaped the behaviour of local commanders of armed groups.[67]

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[61] Interviews with two confidential sources with knowledge of the teak industry, September 2018.

[62] International Tropical Timber Organization statistical data for January–September 2018.

[63] Interviews with three confidential sources with knowledge of the teak industry, in Kampala, Nairobi and South Sudan, May and September 2018.

[64] Interviews with confidential sources familiar with armed groups in Western Equatoria, civil society groups familiar with Western Equatoria and UNMISS staff, April–May and September and October 2018.

[65] Interviews with confidential sources with knowledge of the teak industry in Central Equatoria, including civil society, journalists, United Nations staff and three businessmen, in Kampala, Nairobi and South Sudan, May and September 2018.

[66] Interviews with local political official, May 2018; UNMISS, May 2018; and SPLA-IO source in Kenya, October 2018.

[67] Telephone interviews with South Sudanese civil society, SSPDF, SPLA-IO, NAS, SSNMC representatives, Central Equatoria community leaders and elders, in Juba, Kampala and Nairobi, September and October 2018.

85. Gold production is dominated by artisanal mining, which is vulnerable to taxation and exploitation by armed groups, including SSPDF. The Panel received credible information that more organized semi-industrial exploitation may be taking place. Most if not all of the gold produced is likely smuggled out of South Sudan by air and ground transport and traded both as a commodity and as a substitute for foreign currency to facilitate the trade of other goods.

86. The Panel will continue to investigate gold for the remainder of its mandate. It will also investigate allegations that charcoal has financed armed groups in South Sudan, including SSPDF.

VI. Implementation of the travel ban and asset freeze

A. Travel ban

87. The Panel continued to monitor the implementation of the travel ban renewed by the Security Council in its resolution 2428 (2018). During the reporting period, the Panel focused on the development of a case study on the travel of Gabriel Jok Riak, on whom it gathered and verified allegations of several violations of the travel ban (see annex II).

B. Asset freeze

88. Pursuant to resolutions 2206 (2015) and 2428 (2018), the Panel continued to gather, examine and analyse information regarding the implementation by Member States of asset freeze measures that target the eight individuals currently designated.

89. The Panel identified 19 South Sudanese companies in which sanctioned individuals or close relatives who may be acting on their behalf have held significant shares. This may allow sanctioned individuals continued access to funds and financial services in South Sudan and the regional banking sector, and the Panel will continue to investigate those companies.

90. The Panel contacted commercial banks active in Kenya, South Sudan and Uganda, noting the asset freeze and enquiring about banking activity related to the sanctioned individuals and the additional commercial entities the Panel had identified through its investigations. The Panel received one response confirming accounts potentially linked to sanctioned individuals; an intention to close those accounts has been communicated to the Panel.[68] The Panel met in Nairobi with representatives of KCB and the Governor of the Central Bank of Kenya.

91. The Panel was unable to meet with officials of the Kenyan Ministry of Finance, the Bank of Uganda or the Ugandan Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development, but it plans to make additional requests for meetings with those offices during the remainder of its mandate, considering them important to the implementation of the targeted sanctions.

VII. Conclusion

92. The revitalized peace agreement is undoubtedly a significant development in the effort to bring an end to the conflict in South Sudan, although the agreement it ultimately seeks to revitalize has proved vulnerable to collapse in the past. The Panel

[68] Document on file with the Panel.

observed a number of serious challenges to the implementation of the agreement, including fragmentation and erosion of the chain of command within multiple armed groups, delays in the implementation of key commitments and limited progress towards the implementation of critical security provisions. In a political and security climate shaped by deep mistrust, each can imperil the precarious agreement during the pre-transitional and transitional periods.

93. Confidence-building measures, including those pertaining to security, meaningful power-sharing and revenue management, will therefore be critical in determining whether the agreement can endure the inevitable setbacks. Efforts to ensure that the dividends of peace outweigh those of conflict as the conflict economy in South Sudan continues to prosper will also be important. Robust implementation of the individual sanctions and the arms embargo imposed by the Security Council in resolution 2428 (2018) will be central to their effectiveness, including as regards the challenging economic incentives that run counter to stabilization and peace in South Sudan.

94. Most important, however, will be whether the implementation of the revitalized peace agreement translates into tangible improvements in the lives of civilians across the country who continue to suffer alarming levels of violence, including sexual and gender-based violence, and a desperate humanitarian situation that includes severe food shortages. Many with whom the Panel spoke expressed profound cynicism and distrust of a high-level political process that appears increasingly removed from their suffering.

VIII. Recommendations

95. The Panel makes the following recommendations:

(a) That, to ensure the effective implementation of the arms embargo introduced in resolution 2428 (2018) and to encourage the training of relevant customs agencies, the Committee develop and make available on its website an Implementation Assistance Notice to Member States to aid them in carrying out the arms embargo, with particular attention to the provision of training, the inspection advice detailed in paragraphs 7 to 10 of resolution 2428 (2018), the process by which exemptions may be sought, as detailed in paragraphs 5 and 6 of the resolution, and the deployment of military personnel or equipment within the territory of South Sudan;

(b) That, to demonstrate its resolve in furthering compliance with the designations and to ensure their effectiveness, the Committee issue a press release reiterating the obligation of all Member States to enforce the travel ban and asset freeze measures on the individuals designated pursuant to resolution 2206 (2015) and extended under resolution 2428 (2018);

(c) That, to aid in the identification of and to discourage the misappropriation and diversion of public resources which pose a risk to the peace, security and stability of South Sudan, as outlined in paragraph 15 of resolution 2428 (2018), the Committee write to Member States recommending that they contact relevant companies active or registered in their jurisdictions and urge them to disclose all oil-related payments and pre-payments made to the Government of South Sudan and ensure that all such payments are made in accordance with the provisions of chapter 4 of the revitalized peace agreement and the Petroleum Revenue Management Act of South Sudan. The Panel intends to convey the names of relevant companies in a confidential annex to be provided to the Committee;

(d) That, to prevent the illicit exploitation of or trade in natural resources in ways that may destabilize South Sudan, as described in paragraph 14 (j) of resolution 2428 (2018), paying particular attention to gold that may have originated in South Sudan, the Committee encourage members of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region, as well as Member States outside the region with significant gold-trading sectors, to reiterate and enforce requirements that companies publicly report on their due diligence practices and findings to the standard endorsed by the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region and developed by OECD;[69]

(e) That, to ensure effective measures to address the use and recruitment of child soldiers in South Sudan, as acknowledged in paragraph 14 (f) of resolution 2428 (2018), the Committee urge the immediate release of all child soldiers and recommend strengthened coordination among all relevant agencies working on managing the demobilization of child soldiers, especially during the cantonment process described in the revitalized peace agreement.

[69] Lusaka Declaration of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region Special Summit to Fight Illegal Exploitation of Natural Resources in the Great Lakes Region, 15 December 2010; and OECD Due Diligence Guidance for Responsible Supply Chains of Minerals from Conflict-Affected and High-Risk Areas.

Annex I

Declarations and statements discussed in the case study on Central Equatoria

SOUTH SUDAN
NATIONAL MOVEMENT
FOR CHANGE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Date: 21 September 2018
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SSNMC Public Statement

South Sudan National Movement for Change (SSNMC) would like to thank IGAD, the AU, EU, UN, Troika (US, UK, and Norway), China, and other governments, organizations, and individuals who stood by and supported the people of South Sudan in their quest for a resolution of the conflict in the Republic of South Sudan. SSNMC and the entire people of South Sudan are also deeply grateful and indebted to all humanitarian organizations and their personnel who risked their lives to deliver humanitarian services to the suffering and war entrapped people of South Sudan.

SSNMC strongly believe in a peaceful resolution of the conflict in the Republic of South Sudan which was birthed by greed and power struggle among the leaders and elites of the SPLM and led to wanton brutalization and untold suffering meted on the innocent people of South Sudan. We believe in a meaningful resolution of the conflict based on a clear understanding of the fundamental causes of the conflict and a freely negotiated settlement aimed at addressing the root causes of the conflict to ensure sustainable peace and stability in the greater interest of the people of South Sudan.

The leadership and members of SSNMC would like to register its profound disappointment and dissatisfaction with the process and outcome of the High-Level Revitalization Forum (HLRF); and above all, SSNMC strongly rejects and declares itself NOT a party to the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan (R-ARCSS) mediated by the government of the Sudan for the following reasons among others:

1. The signing of an oil deal between the governments of South Sudan and Sudan before the start of the peace negotiations in Khartoum created a serious conflict of interest that compromised the role of Khartoum as a mediator and has led to infringement on the territorial integrity of the Republic of South Sudan.

2. The conduct of the peace talks or negotiation process in Khartoum was not only unorthodox and lopsided but laden with threats, intimidations, and tactics of divide and conquer by a government that still regards and treats the citizens of South Sudan as its subjects.

3. The agreement rewards and empowers the chief perpetrators of the conflict regardless of the lessons of ARCSS 2015. The agreement balloons the size of government by creating more posts to be filled largely by patrons and members of the current regime who can obstruct any meaningful reform proposals by majority

SOUTH SUDAN
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vote. The Revitalized-ARCSS is, therefore, a much weaker and flawed agreement compared to ARCSS 2015.

4. The provisions in the agreement intended to deliver reforms in the security sector; implementation of a federal system of governance; administration of justice and accountability; and institutional reforms during the transitional period are sketchy, weak, and deliberately embedded with loopholes to undermine implementation.

5. The agreement endorses and codifies ill designs by the regime in South Sudan and the Jieng Council of Elders (JCE) to strategically benefit and empower one ethnic group by the creation of more political constituencies in the name of 32 states.

6. For a new nation that has not seen elected leaders since its independence, extending the rule of the same unelected and tyrannical leaders dampens the hope of transitioning to free and fair democratic elections post the transitional period.

The leadership and members of SSNMC regret that its Chairman and the accompanying delegation to the HLRF are party and signatory to the Revitalized ARCSS. We wish to let the South Sudanese people and the world know that the Chairman acted contrary to the decision of the SSNMC leadership. The Chairman avoided any meaningful engagement with the SSNMC base and rejected verbal and written strong recommendations conveyed to him and SSOA by SSNMC leadership at the negotiations in Khartoum not to initial/sign any bad agreement and walk away from the talks. The conduct of business by the SSNMC chairman and the leaders of other SSOA partners indicate their integrity was compromised in the high-stakes negotiation politics shepherded by the leaders of Sudan and Uganda.

Given the abuse of trust of the SSNMC leadership and members and the deviation from the founding principles of SSNMC as a voice and advocate for the interest of the people of South Sudan, we would like to inform the South Sudanese people, IGAD, AU, UN and international community that effective immediately, Governor Joseph Bangasi Bakosoro has been dismissed from his position as the Chairman of SSNMC and he does not represent any legitimate SSNMC business going forward. Dr. Vakindi Unvu, the Deputy Chairman of SSNMC is appointed Interim Chairman of SSNMC. The SSNMC forces on the ground remain under the command of General Abraham Wani and are in full support of the changes in the leadership of SSNMC.

SSNMC along with other like-minded partners in SSOA remain seized of the pursuit of meaningful negotiated settlement to the crisis in South Sudan that will fulfill the aspirations of the people.

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IMMEDIATE PRESS RELEASE

DATE: 22/09/2018

RE: RESPOND TO THE PUBLIC STATMENT PRESS RELEASED ON 21/09/2018 ON TERMINATION OF PARTY CHAIRMAN (SSNMC)

Following the press released on the above date by the few members of the party, we the sector commanders condemn in the strongest term possible this unlawful act and unprofessional procedures taken towards the party's chairman Hon Joseph Bakosoro Bangasi.

This iniquity by the few individuals within the party doesn't represent our views as army on the ground in one way or another, in fact it's a slap on the faces of any south Sudan citizens who have taken a step and walk towards the realization of peace in the country and Horns of East Africa at large.

Furthermore, the defection of Lt Gen Abraham Wani is considered on the ground of individually basis and will never affect the operations of the movement though, instead we the sector commanders are informing the people of south Sudan and our supporters that we will continue to remain firmed under the command of able and wise leadership of Chairman Joseph Bakosoro Bangasi.

In light of the above, the termination of the party chairman is not acceptable and is unconstitutional.

South Sudan National Movement for change /Army for change will remain united and work collectively to implement the revitalized signed peace agreement on 12th Sept 2018. And if any miss understanding occurred in the leadership, it should be a popular consultation within party to decide, do they really know our situation on the ground here when they say our forces with Gen. Abraham? Who is Vakindi and Kwaje Lasu those who signed the press release are they known to our forces here on the ground or we are just like papers to go with wind where it heads to, big NO remains let them come to the ground and meet us first face to face otherwise that will not work here unless in USA we are not politicians we are in uniform.

SECTOR (ONE) CENTRAL EQUATORIA

Maj. Gen. Joseph Alessandro Mule

Signature ..... Date 22/09/2018 +256-772440031

SECTOR (TWO)WESTERN EQUATORIA

Maj. Gen. Angelo Faustino Nabiso

Signature ..... Date 22/09/2018-0779651020/211925696002

SECTOR (THREE) EASTERN EQUATORIA

Maj. Gen. John Otlang Okoriho

Signature 211921529177 Date 22/09/2018

SSNAC (CHIEF M- I)

Maj. Gen. Alex Henry Abayosa

Signature ..... Date 224-9-2018-0719574179

NATIONAL SALVATION FRONT
SOUTH SUDAN

16th October 2018

NAS Press Release

Yesterday the 14th October 2018 SPLA IO bandits under the command of Col Gadi attacked NAS small patrolling contingency force in Minyori Boma, Yei County. As a result, NAS force responded in self-defense and pursued the SPLA IO bandits into their operational base in disray.

It is worth mentioning that, this SPLA IO bandit base has been used as a launching pad or hub for looting, kidnapping of civilian and NGOs staffs; the repulse of bandits in disray helped some civilians who were under detention to escape and ran towards Yei town.

In June 2018, Col Gadi, kidnapped and detained 10 NGOs staffs including 3 Vehicles. In the process the embattle SPLA IO Deputy Military Spokesman in matter of hours issued a diffecent statement admitting that the missing NGOs staffs and the Vehicles are under their custody.

We are also aware of several video utterance linked to this Deputy Military Spokesman inciting; and accusing NAS. Namely; his video addressing to the SPLA IO forces around Kupery Payam in which he said, "NAS refused to signed the R-ARCISS and therefore, the bush must be destroyed nobody should be left behind". Since this statement was made by Deputy Military Spokesman, then it represents the official position of the SPLA IO intention for violence and all kind of human carnages.

In light of this, NAS is committed to the Agreement on Cessation of Hostilities CoH signed on December 2017 and reserve the right for exercise of self-defense for safety of the NAS forces, innocent civilians and their property.

Suba Samuel Manase

NAS Spokesman

[redacted]

SOUTH SUDAN OPPOSITION ALLIANCE (SSOA)

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Date: 28th June, 2018
Contact: Kwaje Lasu
+1-336-575-5965 (Direct/WhatsApp)
Email: jointoppositionpressrelease@gmail.com

SSOA Press Release on Khartoum Declaration of Agreement 2018

On the 27th instant, the Khartoum Declaration of Agreement was signed. Eye-brows were raised on the appearance of SSOA as a signatory to that document. We would like to shed light in what follows on the circumstances which led SSOA to append its signature.

The Khartoum Declaration of Agreement was totally designed as a "Kiir-Machar" affair as confirmed by the first paragraph of the agreement which states: " *... to facilitate a second round* (following first round in Addis Ababa) *of face-to-face discussion between H. E. Salva Kiir Mayardit and Dr. Riek Machar Teny* ... " This IGAD-style myopic view of the South Sudan problem as a Kiir-Machar reserve was abundantly clear to the entire South Sudan Opposition Alliance as well as other objective observers. In pursuit of the spirit of inclusivity in approaches to solving the South Sudan problem, the leaders of SSOA sought an audience with H. E. President Omer El-Bashir to obtain his assurances that these talks were not to be a two-person affair by any definition. The President was not only understanding, but receptive to the ideas submitted by the SSOA leadership.

It was this concept of inclusivity which was accepted by the President that perhaps led to the inclusion of SSOA and two other political parties as signatories to the document negotiated by Kiir and Machar. The inclusion of SSOA was a surprise to us and hence we sought assurances on the matter from the facilitators in the Government of Sudan.

Faced with two options: snubbing President El-Bashir on first opportunity, or seeing the positives, and use the negatives as the fore-warning on positions to be taken in the substantive matters of the ARCSS, SSOA made the difficult decision to demonstrate a willingness to work with him and

FDP; NAS; NDM; PDM; SPLM-FDs; SSNMC; SSPM; SSLM; SSUM; UDRA

pg. 1

[redacted]

SUDAN PEOPLE'S LIBERATION MOVEMENT/ARMY
SPLM/SPLA (IO)
CHAIRMAN & COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF

Maj. Gen. Matata Frank Alikana
Governor, Yei River State

Subject: Suspension from your duties as Governor of Yei River State and constitution of an Investigation Committee to investigate your involvement in an alleged illegal act.

Following the program entitled "Part III: The Axe Forgets. The Tree Remembers" produced by a Kenyan investigative journalist I, Riek Machar Teny Dhurgon, Chairman and Commander-in-Chief, SPLM/SPLA(IO) hereby suspend you from your duties as Governor of Yei River State and constitute an Investigation Committee to investigate your involvement in the aforesaid program. The committee is constituted as in the attached document.

Based on this order your immunity is hereby lifted so that you can appear before this Investigation Committee.

Your deputy shall immediately act till the final report of the committee is presented to me.

Signed under my hand this day 21st October 2018.

Riek Machar Teny-Dhurgon, PhD
Chairman and Commander-in-Chief, SPLM/SPLA(IO)
21st October 2018

21/10/2018

Annex II

Case study on violations of the travel ban by Gabriel Jok Riak (SSi.001)

Gabriel Jok Riak travelled from South Sudan to Beijing in the period between the end of June and the beginning of July 2018, attending the first China-Africa Defence and Security Forum.[1] He appeared in a televised interview, broadcast by China Global Television Network, from the Forum's venue.[2]

He also travelled from South Sudan to Kampala, where, on 26 August 2018, he attended an alumni dinner at Cavendish University Uganda.[3]

Jok Riak travelled from South Sudan to Khartoum in early October 2018, where he:

- On 2 October, attended bilateral military meetings with his Sudanese counterpart, Kamal Abdel Marouf al-Mahi; Sudanese Defence Minister Awad Ibn Ouf; and SPLM-IO Chief of Staff Simon Gatwech Dual, who is also subject to a travel ban (SSi.002)[4]
- On 4 October, in the Shakhout area, attended a military drill alongside the Army Chief of Staff of the Sudan, Kamal Abdel Marouf al-Mahi[5]
- On 6 October, signed, with the Army Chief of Staff of the Sudan, an agreement for the establishment of a buffer zone on the shared border[6]

The Panel intends to continue investigating those violations, including with a view to identifying which airlines facilitated the travel of Jok Riak.

[1] *Sudan Tribune*, "South Sudanese blacklisted general travelled to China despite UN sanctions", 16 August 2018.
[2] CGTN TV, "First China-Africa Defense & Security Forum concludes", 10 July 2018.
[3] Interview with confidential source. See also: www.cavendish.ac.ug/news-updates/article/23.
[4] *Sudan Tribune*, "Sudan-South Sudan military cooperation is crucial for bilateral relations: defence minister", 2 October 2018.
[5] Xinhua, "Sudanese armed forces conclude ground drills north of Khartoum", 5 October 2018.
[6] CGTN Africa, "Sudan, S. Sudan agree to establish buffer zone, open border crossings", 6 October 2018.

Monday August 27, 2018

Cavendish University Uganda celebrates its first alumni dinner

Gen Gabriel Jok Riak Chief of Defense Forces SPLA speaking during alumni dinner organized at International conference Hotel Serena in Kampala. (Photo Martin Manyiel Wugol)

By Martin Manyiel Wugol in Kampala

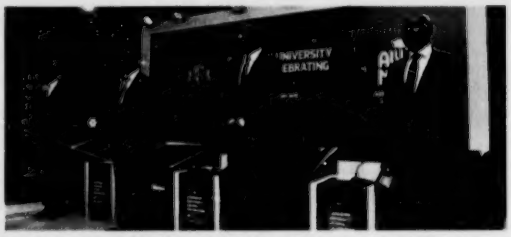
Cavendish University Uganda (CUU) is a leading private University in Uganda with the motto of "Success Begin at Cavendish University". The alumni dinner was organized extraordinarily to honor alumni and at the same time mark ten years of transformative education achieved since its establishment

Cavendish University graduated a great number of South Sudanese government officials including Gen. Marial Chanuong former commander of Tiger Divisionknown as presidential guard and the current CDF Gen Gabriel Jok Riak Makol who was invited for the dinner as special guest and alumni of South Sudanese students representative to share his experienced during their time in the University.

Among the Cavendish University alumni were the state minister of lands and urban development government of Uganda. Persis Namuganza who appreciated South Sudanese people for making sure peace was restored in the country " we all love in the region" and that it was the hope and daily prayers to see South Sudan move forward, adding " because we all fought to make South Sudan get her independence and be free from challenges facing the country" including education and other developmental programs. Said the minister.

Speaking to alumni Gen Jok congratulated South Sudanese students for being resilience and by taking education seriously for the future development and to advance the togetherness of South Sudanese communities. Gen. Jok explained the toughness of education particularly when one was a working class there comes a time professors made things difficult to students but he reminded them to always be focused to continue with education adding that at the efid of challenges one would be crowned the winner in life. Gen Jok urged his colleagues and the entire citizens of South Sudan to take education as an agent of peace.

Gen Jok obtained his master degree in international relations at Cavendish University Uganda. Gen Jok applauded the assistance of his supervisor professor Samuel Mayanga for being a no nonsense lecturer treated all students the same regardless of their political



10 YEARS OF GROOMING RESPONSIBLE, EDUCATED, EMPLOYABLE AND ENTREPRENEURIAL CITIZENS (REEE)

On Saturday, 25th August, Cavendish University Uganda (CUU) celebrated 10 years of grooming responsible, educated, employable and entrepreneurial citizens (REEE) at the Kampala Serena Hotel. This occasion was also marked by the launch of the Alumni Association which is distinguished not only by its venerable alumni but also by being only the 4th university Alumni Association in Uganda. The theme for the day was "Cavendish University Uganda: Ten Years of Transformative Education and Graduate Success".

Among the alumni was Gen. Jok Riak Mahel of South Sudan; the State Minister for Lands in Uganda and Executive Director of the National Planning Authority and Katikuro of the Busoga Kingdom, Dr. Joseph Muvawala who graced the occasion as the Guest of Honour.

Left: Gabriel Jok Riak attends alumni event at Cavendish Univcrsity, Uganda, Juba Monitor, 27 August 2018
Above: Website of Cavendish University: www.cavendish.ac.ug/news-updates/article/23

First China-Africa Defense & Security Forum concludes

POLITICS By Zheng Yibing

2018-07-10 23:29 GMT+8 | Updated 2018-07-11 10:44 GMT+8

Share

Left: Gabriel Jok Riak attends First China-Africa Defense and Security Forum, China, between 26 June and 10 July, and is interviewed on CGTN: https://news.cgtn.com/news/3d3d514f31457a4e78457a6333566d54/share_p.html

United Nations S/2018/1050

Security Council

Distr.: General
28 November 2018
English
Original: Russian

Letter dated 26 November 2018 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit herewith information bulletins from the Russian Federation Ministry of Defence regarding the status of implementation of the memorandum on the creation of de-escalation areas in the Syrian Arab Republic for 22–26 November 2018 (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) D. **Polyanskiy**
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

18-20465 (E) 291118 291118

Please recycle

Annex to the letter dated 26 November 2018 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Information bulletin from the Russian Federation Ministry of Defence regarding the status of implementation of the memorandum on the creation of de-escalation areas (22 November 2018)

Observance of the ceasefire regime

Monitoring groups have continued to monitor observance of the ceasefire regime as part of implementing the memorandum on the creation of de-escalation areas in the Syrian Arab Republic, signed by the Russian Federation, the Republic of Turkey and the Islamic Republic of Iran on 4 May 2017.

The Russian representative office of the Russian and Turkish Joint Commission reviewing issues related to violations of the ceasefire regime has reported eight incidents of gunfire in the following Governorates: three in Ladhiqiyah, two in Dayr al-Zawr, two in Aleppo and one in Hama.

The Turkish representative office has reported five incidents of gunfire: three in Idlib Governorate and two in Aleppo Governorate.

Provision of humanitarian aid to the population of the Syrian Arab Republic

Over the past 24 hours, the Centre for Reconciliation of Opposing Sides in the Syrian Arab Republic has carried out one humanitarian operation: in Rastan, Homs Governorate, 450 food parcels with a total weight of 1.95 tons were delivered.

In total, 1,999 humanitarian operations have been carried out. The total weight of humanitarian cargo delivered is 3,132.4 tons.

Reconciliation of opposing sides

No ceasefire agreements have been signed over the past 24 hours.

The number of populated areas that have joined the reconciliation process is 2,518.

The number of armed groups that have announced their commitment to accepting and fulfilling the terms of the ceasefire is unchanged — it is still 234.

Information bulletin from the Russian Federation Ministry of Defence regarding the status of implementation of the memorandum on the creation of de-escalation areas (23 November 2018)

Observance of the ceasefire regime

Monitoring groups have continued to monitor observance of the ceasefire regime as part of implementing the memorandum on the creation of de-escalation areas in the Syrian Arab Republic, signed by the Russian Federation, the Republic of Turkey and the Islamic Republic of Iran on 4 May 2017.

The Russian representative office of the Russian and Turkish Joint Commission reviewing issues related to violations of the ceasefire regime has reported three incidents of gunfire in the following Governorates: one in Aleppo, one in Hama and one in Ladhiqiyah.

The Turkish representative office has reported seven incidents of gunfire in the following Governorates: three in Hama, three in Idlib and one in Aleppo.

Provision of humanitarian aid to the population of the Syrian Arab Republic

Over the past 24 hours, the Centre for Reconciliation of Opposing Sides in the Syrian Arab Republic has carried out one humanitarian operation: in Tasnin, Homs Governorate, 450 food parcels with a total weight of 1.95 tons were delivered.

In total, 2,000 humanitarian operations have been carried out. The total weight of humanitarian cargo delivered is 3,134.35 tons.

Reconciliation of opposing sides

No ceasefire agreements have been signed over the past 24 hours.

The number of populated areas that have joined the reconciliation process is 2,518.

The number of armed groups that have announced their commitment to accepting and fulfilling the terms of the ceasefire is unchanged — it is still 234.

Information bulletin from the Russian Federation Ministry of Defence regarding the status of implementation of the memorandum on the creation of de-escalation areas (24 November 2018)

Observance of the ceasefire regime

Monitoring groups have continued to monitor observance of the ceasefire regime as part of implementing the memorandum on the creation of de-escalation areas in the Syrian Arab Republic, signed by the Russian Federation, the Republic of Turkey and the Islamic Republic of Iran on 4 May 2017.

The Russian representative office of the Russian and Turkish Joint Commission reviewing issues related to violations of the ceasefire regime has reported four incidents of gunfire in the following Governorates: two in Ladhiqiyah, one in Aleppo and one in Idlib.

The Turkish representative office has reported two incidents of gunfire: one in Aleppo Governorate and one in Hama Governorate.

Provision of humanitarian aid to the population of the Syrian Arab Republic

The Centre for Reconciliation of Opposing Sides in the Syrian Arab Republic has not carried out any humanitarian operations over the past 24 hours.

In total, 2,000 humanitarian operations have been carried out. The total weight of humanitarian cargo delivered is 3,134.35 tons.

Reconciliation of opposing sides

No ceasefire agreements have been signed over the past 24 hours.

The number of populated areas that have joined the reconciliation process is 2,518.

The number of armed groups that have announced their commitment to accepting and fulfilling the terms of the ceasefire is unchanged — it is still 234.

Information bulletin from the Russian Federation Ministry of Defence regarding the status of implementation of the memorandum on the creation of de-escalation areas (25 November 2018)

Observance of the ceasefire regime

Monitoring groups have continued to monitor observance of the ceasefire regime as part of implementing the memorandum on the creation of de-escalation areas in the Syrian Arab Republic, signed by the Russian Federation, the Republic of Turkey and the Islamic Republic of Iran on 4 May 2017.

The Russian representative office of the Russian and Turkish Joint Commission reviewing issues related to violations of the ceasefire regime has reported eight incidents of gunfire in the following Governorates: five in Aleppo, two in Ladhiqiyah and one in Hama.

The Turkish representative office has reported two incidents of gunfire: one in Aleppo Governorate and one in Idlib Governorate.

Provision of humanitarian aid to the population of the Syrian Arab Republic

Over the past 24 hours, the Centre for Reconciliation of Opposing Sides and Refugee Migration Monitoring has carried out two humanitarian operations: in Husayniyah, Dayr al-Zawr Governorate, 450 food parcels with a total weight of 1.95 tons were delivered; and in Tallbissah, Homs Governorate, 200 food parcels with a total weight of 0.9 tons were delivered.

In total, 2,002 humanitarian operations have been carried out. The total weight of humanitarian cargo delivered is 3,137.2 tons.

Reconciliation of opposing sides

No ceasefire agreements have been signed over the past 24 hours.

The number of populated areas that have joined the reconciliation process is 2,518.

The number of armed groups that have announced their commitment to accepting and fulfilling the terms of the ceasefire is unchanged — it is still 234.

Information bulletin from the Russian Federation Ministry of Defence regarding the status of implementation of the memorandum on the creation of de-escalation areas (26 November 2018)

Observance of the ceasefire regime

Monitoring groups have continued to monitor observance of the ceasefire regime as part of implementing the memorandum on the creation of de-escalation areas in the Syrian Arab Republic, signed by the Russian Federation, the Republic of Turkey and the Islamic Republic of Iran on 4 May 2017.

The Russian representative office of the Russian and Turkish Joint Commission reviewing issues related to violations of the ceasefire regime has reported five incidents of gunfire: four in Ladhiqiyah Governorate and one in Hama Governorate.

The Turkish representative office has reported seven incidents of gunfire: six in Aleppo Governorate and one in Hama Governorate.

Provision of humanitarian aid to the population of the Syrian Arab Republic

The Centre for Reconciliation of Opposing Sides and Refugee Migration Monitoring has not carried out any humanitarian operations over the past 24 hours.

In total, 2,002 humanitarian operations have been carried out. The total weight of humanitarian cargo delivered is 3,137.2 tons.

Reconciliation of opposing sides

No ceasefire agreements have been signed over the past 24 hours.

The number of populated areas that have joined the reconciliation process is 2,518.

The number of armed groups that have announced their commitment to accepting and fulfilling the terms of the ceasefire is unchanged — it is still 234.

United Nations S/2018/1051

Security Council

Distr.: General
27 November 2018

Original: English

Letter dated 26 November 2018 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council

Pursuant to Security Council resolution 1244 (1999), I have the honour to transmit the attached letters, dated 7 August 2018 (see annex I) and 26 October 2018 (see annex II), from the Secretary-General of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, Jens Stoltenberg, transmitting the reports on the international security presence in Kosovo, covering the period from 1 April to 30 June 2018 and from 1 July to 30 September 2018, respectively.

I should be grateful if the present letter and its annexes were to be brought to the attention of the members of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) António **Guterres**

18-20412 (E) 291118

Please recycle

Annex I

In accordance with paragraph 20 of Security Council resolution 1244 (1999), please find attached the quarterly report on Kosovo Force operations covering the period from 1 April to 30 June 2018 (see enclosure). I would appreciate your making the report available to the members of the Council.

(*Signed*) Jens **Stoltenberg**

Enclosure

Report to the United Nations on Kosovo Force operations

1. The present report, submitted in accordance with Security Council resolution 1244 (1999), covers the Kosovo Force (KFOR) activities in the period from 1 April to 30 June 2018.

2. As at 30 June 2018, the total number of KFOR troops in theatre remained approximately 4,000, from 19 North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and 8 non-NATO troop-contributing nations.

3. During the reporting period, there were no major security incidents and KFOR was not requested or required to directly intervene as a third responder.

Security situation update and operations

4. During the reporting period, the overall security situation in Kosovo remained generally stable, but fragile, with no major disruptions to the safe and secure environment. The high-level meeting between the President of Serbia, Aleksandar Vučić, and Hashim Thaçi, held on 24 June 2018 in Brussels, resumed the Belgrade-Pristina dialogue facilitated by the European Union and had a positive effect on the security situation in Kosovo.

5. KFOR continued to conduct routine framework operations across the area of operations and has also been closely monitoring developments related to the Kosovo Security Force and possible indictments by the Kosovo Specialist Court, with potential security implications.

6. KFOR maintained a flexible force posture to be able to respond rapidly and effectively. In June 2018, within the normal training cycle, KFOR conducted operational rehearsal activities to verify the readiness of the operational reserve forces.

7. KFOR continued to work in close cooperation with the other security organizations in Kosovo. On 27 April 2018, KFOR successfully completed the biannual exercise Silver Sabre 2018-1. From 4 to 13 May 2018, KFOR provided training and medical support for exercise Eagle VI led by the Kosovo Security Force, which brought together NATO and international partners. Both exercises focused on improving interoperability, civil disturbance management and emergency disaster relief operations.

Summary

8. During the reporting period, KFOR effectively contributed to both maintaining a safe and secure environment and ensuring freedom of movement as part of a comprehensive international effort. The close coordination and cooperation at the tactical level between KFOR, the European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo and Kosovo police continue to be highly effective.

Annex II

In accordance with paragraph 20 of Security Council resolution 1244 (1999), please find attached the quarterly report on Kosovo Force operations covering the period from 1 July to 30 September 2018 (see enclosure). I would appreciate your making the report available to the members of the Council.

(*Signed*) Jens **Stoltenberg**

Enclosure

Report to the United Nations on Kosovo Force operations

1. The present report, submitted in accordance with Security Council resolution 1244 (1999), covers the Kosovo Force (KFOR) activities during the period from 1 July to 30 September 2018.

2. As at 30 September 2018, the total number of KFOR troops in theatre remained approximately 3,800, from 19 North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and 8 non-NATO troop-contributing nations.

3. There were no major security incidents during the reporting period and no requirement for KFOR to intervene as a third responder.

Security situation update and operations

4. During the reporting period, there was no significant change to the overall security situation in Kosovo, which remained generally stable, but fragile. Continued political progress is required to significantly improve the current situation. Though Belgrade and Pristina remain generally committed to the dialogue process led by the European Union, they still have persisting disagreements on key issues.

5. KFOR continued to conduct routine framework operations in the area of operations, combined with coordinated and comprehensive engagement activities by key leaders. KFOR maintained a flexible force posture to be able to respond rapidly and effectively.

6. From 2 to 4 August 2018, KFOR conducted exercise Watchful Commitment to demonstrate the readiness and ability of KFOR units to deploy in order to deter any potential restrictions on freedom of movement and ensure the maintenance of a safe and secure environment.

7. KFOR continued to work in close cooperation with the other security organizations in Kosovo. On 5 July 2018, KFOR successfully hosted a workshop on foreign fighters and religious extremism, with the participation of delegations from Albania, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia[1], the Institutions in Kosovo, Montenegro, the European Union-led peacekeeping force and the NATO Intelligence Fusion Centre. From 3 to 7 September 2018, designated elements of the KFOR Tactical Reserve Battalion participated in the peace support operation exercise Quick Response 2018 in Bosnia and Herzegovina, which makes use of the capability of the European Union-led peacekeeping force to activate over-the-horizon reserves in support of local authorities in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Summary

8. KFOR remained effective in its mission operations, contributing to a safe and secure environment that enhances the dynamic stability across the entire territory of Kosovo as part of a comprehensive international effort. The close coordination and cooperation at the tactical level between KFOR, the European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo and Kosovo police continue to be effective.

[1] Turkey recognizes the Republic of Macedonia with its constitutional name.

United Nations A/73/601–S/2018/1052

General Assembly
Security Council

Distr.: General
28 November 2018

Original: English

General Assembly
Seventy-third session
Agenda item 67
The situation in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine

Security Council
Seventy-third year

Letter dated 25 November 2018 from the Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

On 25 November 2018, Russian Federation military vessels fired on and forcefully captured three Ukrainian navy vessels near the Kerch Strait, thus committing an act of aggression against Ukraine as set out in in article 3 (d) of the annex to General Assembly resolution 3314 (XXIX), entitled "Definition of Aggression", which is yet another demonstration of the belligerent behaviour of the Russian Federation in the Black Sea and the Sea of Azov.

This act constitutes a clear violation of the Charter of the United Nations and is a threat to international peace and security.

I have the honour to enclose herewith a statement by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine on Russia's armed provocation in the Black Sea and the Sea of Azov.

I would appreciate your kind assistance in having the present letter and its annex distributed as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 67, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Volodymyr **Yelchenko**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

18-20484 (E) 301118

Please recycle

Annex to the letter dated 25 November 2018 from the Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Statement by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine on Russia's armed provocation in the Black Sea and the Sea of Azov

25 November 2018

Provocative actions of the Russian Federation in the Black Sea and the Sea of Azov have transgressed all boundaries and become aggressive.

Ships of the Russian Federation, in violation of freedom of navigation, unlawfully used force against the ships of the Ukrainian Naval Forces.

We consider such aggressive actions as a violation of the norms of the Charter of the United Nations and the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea.

Ukraine will take all appropriate measures to ensure diplomatic and legal response.

We will also inform our partners about the aggressive acts of the Russian Federation in the Sea of Azov. Such actions pose a threat to the security of all States of the Black Sea region and thus demand a clear reaction from the international community.

United Nations A/73/605–S/2018/1053

General Assembly
Security Council

Distr.: General
30 November 2018

Original: English

General Assembly
Seventy-third session
Agenda item 67
The situation in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine

Security Council
Seventy-third year

Letter dated 27 November 2018 from the Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to enclose herewith a statement by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine in connection with another act of aggression against Ukraine (see annex).

I would appreciate your kind assistance in having the present letter and its annex distributed as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 67, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Volodymyr **Yelchenko**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

18-20675 (E) 041218

Please recycle

Annex to the letter dated 27 November 2018 from the Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Statement by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine in connection with another act of aggression against Ukraine

26 November 2018

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine expresses its strong protest to the Russian Federation in connection with the armed attack and capture of the Ukrainian navy ships «Berdyansk», «Nikopol» and the tug boat «Yana Kapu», as well as the wounding and capturing of members of their crews.

The attack on Ukrainian ships that was carried out during a sea crossing from the port of Odessa to the port of Mariupol, in accordance with the provisions of all effective multilateral and bilateral international treaties and navigation rules, is nothing but another act of armed aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine, as defined, in particular, in Article 2 of the Charter of the United Nations and the provisions of UN General Assembly Resolution 29/3314 of 14 December 1974 on the definition of aggression. Russia has *de facto* expanded its military aggression against Ukraine to the sea.

Kremlin's criminal regime has today once again demonstrated that it won't stop its aggressive policy and is ready for any acts of aggression against the Ukrainian state.

Ukraine demands to provide urgent medical assistance to the wounded and to ensure their immediate safe return home. Ukraine also demands to return the captured navy ships and to compensate for the damage caused.

It is Kremlin's regime who bears full responsibility for further aggravation of the situation in the Azov and Black Seas and for undermining the peaceful settlement of the Russian-Ukrainian armed conflict.

Ukraine urges its allies and partners to take all necessary measures to deter the aggressor, i.a. by applying new and strengthening existing sanctions, as well as by providing Ukraine with military assistance to protect its territorial integrity and sovereignty within the internationally recognized borders.

United Nations S/2018/1054

Security Council

Distr.: General
28 November 2018

Original: English

Letter dated 27 November 2018 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

With reference to the letter dated 3 May 2018 from the Permanent Representative of Saudi Arabia to the United Nations (S/2018/423) as well as the letter dated 26 September 2018 from the Permanent Representative of the Sudan to the United Nations (S/2018/878) addressed to the President of the Security Council, transmitting, respectively, a resolution and a communiqué issued during two of the meetings of the League of Arab States on 15 April 2018 and 11 September 2018, respectively, I would like to bring the following to your attention.

1. This is not the first time that the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has abused international and regional organizations to advance its politically motivated policies against the Islamic Republic of Iran through disinformation, fabrications and baseless allegations. Such provocative policies and ill-advised practices are against peaceful coexistence, good-neighbourliness and regional peace, security and stability.

2. In its foreign policy, the Islamic Republic of Iran accords priority to friendship with its neighbours, peace and stability in the region and constructive engagement across the globe. Iran is determined to continue to actively pursue this policy and its constructive cooperation with neighbouring countries and the international community in realizing common goals and addressing common threats, including the growing threats of terrorism and violent extremism.

3. Iran highly respects the principles of national sovereignty and non-interference in the internal affairs of other countries. At the same time, the Islamic Republic of Iran expects all neighbouring countries to fully respect its national sovereignty and territorial integrity and, in full conformity with their obligations under the Charter of the United Nations, to refrain from interference in its domestic affairs.

4. In this context, supporting the baseless unilateral claim by the United Arab Emirates over the Iranian islands of Abu Musa, the Lesser Tunb and the Greater Tunb must be stopped. The Islamic Republic of Iran reiterates its consistent and principled position that it does not recognize the existence of any such dispute between Iran and the United Arab Emirates. The three islands have been and continue to be an inseparable part of the territory of the Islamic Republic of Iran and, therefore, any claim to the contrary is categorically rejected. Nonetheless, and to show its utmost respect for the principle of good-neighbourliness, Iran has always expressed its readiness to talk with the United Arab Emirates bilaterally with a view to removing any misunderstanding that may exist on the part of the United Arab Emirates over

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Abu Musa island. That said, we caution against any involvement by third parties in this issue of a bilateral character and regard such involvement to be hardly constructive or useful.

5. The baseless claims over the supplying of arms by the Islamic Republic of Iran to Yemen in violation of resolutions 2216 (2015) and 2231 (2015) of the Security Council are aimed at covering up the crimes committed by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in Yemen and are firmly rejected. Instead of such fabrications, Saudi Arabia should end its aggression against Yemen, stop investing in death and destruction in that country as well as other countries in the region, put an end to interference in the regional countries and allow the realization of the legitimate rights of the people. Such fabrications were also repeated in a letter dated 20 November 2018 addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2018/1039), which hereby is categorically rejected.

6. While the International Atomic Energy Agency, as the only relevant competent international authority, for 13 times so far, has confirmed the full implementation by the Islamic Republic of Iran of its nuclear-related commitments under the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action and thus has approved both the effectiveness of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action and Iran's commitment thereto, questioning the capacity of this agreement and Iran's commitment to it is nothing but a dishonest and deceitful policy. Recalling that resolution 2231 (2015) has called upon all Members States, regional organizations and international organizations to take the appropriate actions to support the implementation of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action and to refrain from taking actions that undermine its implementation, such expressions are against the letter and spirit of that resolution.

7. Finally, "Persian Gulf" is the only true geographical designation for the body of water lying between Iran and the Arabian Peninsula, which has been used since the dawn of history. As the institutional memory of all renowned cartographic agencies testifies, this sea area has been always identified as "Persian Gulf". In this context, the policy of the United Nations in the standardization of geographical names, and its practice in emphasizing the name Persian Gulf as the only geographical designation applicable to this body of water, are noteworthy and should therefore be respected by all.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Eshagh **Al Habib**
Ambassador
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

United Nations S/2018/1055

Security Council

Distr.: General
4 December 2018
English
Original: Arabic

Identical letters dated 28 November 2018 from the from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

On instructions from my Government, I should like to convey to you the position of the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic regarding the fifty-seventh report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of Security Council resolutions 2139 (2014), 2165 (2014), 2191 (2014), 2258 (2015), 2332 (2016), 2393 (2017) and 2401 (2018) (S/2018/1041).

The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic once again expresses its regret that the authors of the reports of the Secretary-General continue to take a negative and politicized approach to the Syrian Arab Republic and its institutions. They continue to make the same errors involving major departures from their mandate, and they continue to wilfully disregard the comments, concerns and questions raised by the Syrian Arab Republic about previous Secretariat reports.

The Syrian Arab Republic has concluded that the present report, despite some positive aspects reflected in some paragraphs, is replete with errors and does not address the real humanitarian situation in the Syrian Arab Republic or what Syrians need to alleviate their suffering and harsh conditions and strengthen their resilience. The Syrian Government reiterates that continued adherence to this politicized approach when preparing these reports, which only serves to further the agendas of certain influential States in the Security Council and their proxies in the region, will harm the Secretariat's reputation and credibility.

What follows is an overview of the position of the Syrian Government with respect to the humanitarian situation in the Syrian Arab Republic and the report under consideration.

- Just as in the previous report, the Secretariat continues to claim, astonishingly, that the Syrian Government did not approve the bimonthly convoy plan for September and October. The truth, as we pointed out in our response to the fifty-sixth report, is that the Government asked the United Nations to include areas from which armed terrorist groups have been expelled and which have returned to the control of the Syrian State, but which the United Nations had originally classified as besieged or hard-to-reach, in the monthly regular programme for aid delivery (S/2018/965).

- The report provides indirect political cover for military operations being carried out by the United States-led international coalition against civilians in several areas in the Dayr al-Zawr countryside. It describes them in more than one

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paragraph as "military operations" against the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) terrorist organization, when the truth is that the attacks have resulted in the deaths of dozens of Syrian civilians, mostly women and children. We have already documented that in a number of identical letters sent by the Syrian Government to the President of the Security Council and the Secretary-General. In our response to the fifty-sixth report, we drew attention to crimes already committed against innocent Syrian civilians by the illegitimate United States-led international coalition. On 13 and 14 October 2018, that coalition's aircraft dropped internationally prohibited white phosphorus bombs on residential homes in the city of Hajin in Dayr al-Zawr governorate. On 19 October 2018, they bombed residential homes in the villages of Susah and Albu Badran in the southern countryside of Dayr al-Zawr governorate. On 12 November 2018, in continuation of its systematic targeting of civilians, the international coalition perpetrated a new crime against the village of Hajin. It also attacked Sha'fah and other villages in rural Dayr al-Zawr governorate, killing and injuring more than 60 Syrian civilians. Contrary to what the report says about those operations being directed against the ISIL terrorist organization, they are in fact war crimes and crimes against humanity. They demonstrate, once again, that the States of the coalition have no regard for international law and international humanitarian law, and in particular the principles of discrimination and proportionality.

- Following up the report's reference to the discovery of a mass grave containing 1,000 bodies in the city of Raqqah, the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic can confirm that a number of mass graves were found in the city of Raqqah containing more than four thousand bodies, mostly of women, children and the elderly. Those graves were discovered under the rubble left behind by the bombing of Raqqah by international coalition forces. A mass grave was also discovered in an agricultural field next to the Children's Hospital and the National Hospital containing the remains of 2,500 women, children and elderly persons, in addition to the mass grave was discovered in the Panorama area that holds the remains of more than 1,500 civilians who were killed when the international coalition bombarded Raqqah city under the pretext of liberating it from terrorism. We note that that bombardment occurred after coalition forces had evacuated the ISIL terrorists whose safety the coalition was concerned about and transferred them to Dayr al-Zawr Governorate to fight the Syrian Arab Army and finish carrying out the coalition's plan to undermine, in cooperation with allied terrorist groups and militias, the unity and sovereignty of the Syrian Arab Republic.

- The Syrian Arab Republic is astonished that the authors insist on inflating the importance of isolated incidents in certain parts of Syria and cite false information and statistics (such as claims about attacks on hospitals and schools) that are sourced largely from the armed terrorist groups themselves. Meanwhile, the Secretariat and its sources intentionally neglect to inform Member States, by way of example, that incidents involving car bombs, attacks on aid workers and improvised explosive devices, which, as the report states, occur mostly in Idlib governorate (paragraphs 5 and 21), are being carried out by armed terrorist groups, which are called "non-State armed opposition groups" in the report, in violation of international law and international humanitarian law.

- Paragraph 27 notes that the Syrian Government approved all requests made by the World Food Programme, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the United Nations Children's Fund, each within its competence, whether for the transport of food, relief items and livelihood kits, or health-care and immunization services. The report provides

statistics on children's access to education services, protection and psychological/social support services, and the millions of people receiving food assistance. None of this would be happening without the facilities being provided to United Nations agencies by the Syrian Government out of its responsibility to provide humanitarian assistance to all its citizens without discrimination wherever they may be within the territory of the Syrian Arab Republic.

- We confirm that from the beginning of October through 26 November 2018, United Nations agencies submitted 45 entry visa applications of which 37, or 82 per cent, were approved. Five applications are pending and three were rejected. During that same period, United Nations agencies submitted 92 applications for residence permit renewals, of which all were approved.

- With regard to the situation in the Rukban camp, the Syrian Government reiterates the information provided in its response to the previous report. It emphasizes that because of approvals and facilities granted by the Syrian Government, the United Nations and the Syrian Arab Red Crescent were able to send a humanitarian assistance convoy to Rukban camp between 3 and 8 November 2018. It wishes to make clear that the only reason that convoy needed to be arranged in the first place is that the United States of America is occupying part of Syrian territory, and would not accept arrangements for a humanitarian corridor to the camp. In the past, the United States has tried to block such convoys on various grounds, including the security situation. We also wish to point out that the Syrian Government acted to protect the convoy up to the 55 km mark from threats posed by the ISIL terrorist organization and other terrorist groups that are deployed in the Tanf area with the support and protection of the United States of America. Moreover, the United States entrusted the responsibility of protecting the convoy to an armed terrorist group allied with it. As a result, there are no guarantees that the assistance will be delivered to people in need in the camp. In the light of the foregoing, the United Nations must provide a detailed report on how assistance was distributed in the camp, including who and how many were the recipients, and who was in charge of the distributing.

- The Syrian Arab Republic emphasizes the need for increased international humanitarian support in order to meet the urgent humanitarian needs of Syrians, especially given the current level of international financing, which, to date, stands at 57.5 per cent of what is needed. In their review conferences, donors have tied their funding pledges to political conditions that are incompatible with the principles of humanitarian work. In particular, they refuse to fund the rehabilitation of basic service facilities that could help strengthen the resilience of Syrians and support the return of Syrian refugees and internally displaced persons to their areas in a safe and dignified manner. Despite their importance, the authors of the report ignore those issues and conditions, thereby demonstrating that they do not take the humanitarian situation in Syria seriously enough.

- The Syrian Arab Republic regrets that the authors of the report, in conformity with the instructions of certain Western States, are continuing to misguidedly promote cross-border assistance, which has been proven to be ineffective (paragraph 29). It has been established that it is impossible to ensure that such assistance reaches its rightful civilian beneficiaries. In fact, such assistance, one way or another, constitutes indirect support for the terrorists, especially when a large proportion of such operations are happening at the Syrian-Turkish border and are being channelled toward areas under the control of armed terrorist groups that commandeer that assistance and then distribute it to their members

and their families. The officials in charge of the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) have been unable to maintain standards of transparency and provide the guarantees necessary to reassure the international community that cross-border assistance is going to the rightful beneficiaries, rather than to the armed groups. In paragraph 29, the authors unfortunately refer to the same vague ideas that appear in previous reports of the Secretariat concerning so-called partners and independent third-party companies contracted by the United Nations to verify that assistance is reaching the right storage facilities and recipients. Such ideas and references are unacceptable. No United Nations official has ever discussed them with the Syrian Government, which is the primary party concerned. They also flagrantly contravene Security Council resolution 2165 (2014), and those who propagated and implemented those ideas bear full responsibility at the international level. The Syrian Government once again demands that the United Nations should supply it with the names and records of the parties that are supposed to be acting as United Nations partners. It also looks forward to the information and clarification that the Secretariat was requested to provide under Security Council resolution 2393 (2017).

- The Syrian Arab Republic once again expresses its rejection of the continuing illegitimate and irresponsible practice on the part of the authors of the report and officials of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) of using the term "non-State armed opposition" to refer to the ISIL and Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham terrorist organizations, even though the authors are well aware that those two organizations appear on the Security Council lists relating to the Al-Qaida terrorist organization and associated individuals and entities. Those two organizations have links with numerous terrorist groups deployed in Syria.

- The Syrian Arab Republic once again stresses that the Secretariat, when preparing its reports on the humanitarian situation in Syria, should use experts who are capable of choosing their terminology without bias and in a manner that takes into account legal considerations and is professional and objective. Otherwise, Secretariat reports on the implementation of United Nations resolutions will turn into mouthpieces for the wishes of certain Western States that have adopted extremist and hostile positions with respect to the Syrian State. On the subject of designations, my Government is still surprised that, in their reports, the authors' have repeatedly failed to explicitly describe ISIL, Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham and their affiliated and allied organizations as terrorist.

- The Syrian Arab Republic reiterates its call upon the Secretariat to pressure the States and entities that have imposed coercive unilateral measures on the Syrian people to lift them immediately. The Syrian Arab Republic stresses that the continued imposition of those measures is the primary obstacle to ensuring the basic needs of the Syrian people, improving their humanitarian and living conditions, and putting in place the necessary conditions for the return of internally displaced persons and refugees to their homes and the restoration of normal life. The Syrian Arab Republic stresses that the continued failure by the authors of the report to address this important issue as something that can only be described as "irresponsible conduct and a clear sign of lack of professionalism", and constitutes an unacceptable failure to respect the principles of humanitarian work and carry out such work impartially and objectively.

- In the report under consideration, the authors endeavour to blur mandates and competences by discussing the political situation and by using numerous politicized terms. The Syrian Arab Republic rejects that approach. Such terms

have nothing to do with the authors' mandate or the topic of the report, which is supposed to be about the humanitarian situation in the Syrian Arab Republic.

The Syrian Arab Republic once again calls on the Security Council to stop issuing these monthly reports, which many see as a waste of time, money and human resources, and replace them with quarterly reports that are written in a professional and credible manner.

I should be grateful if the present letter could be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Mounzer **Mounzer**
Minister Plenipotentiary
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

United Nations S/2018/1056

Security Council

Distr.: General
28 November 2018

Original: English

Letter dated 27 November 2018 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

Upon instruction from my Government and pursuant to the letters dated 4 May 2017 (S/2017/393), 8 June 2017 (S/2017/489) and 3 October 2018 (S/2018/891) from the Islamic Republic of Iran regarding the short-sighted policies of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to promote extremist and terrorist groups in the region, I have the honour to bring the following to your attention:

There is enough evidence about the subversive plans of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia against the Iranian security and economy. This includes its publicized plan to "work so that the battle is ... inside Iran". It has supported terrorist groups and criminal activities inside the Islamic Republic of Iran as part of such a plan. The terrorist acts that have occurred in Iran in recent years, including those in the city of Ahvaz on 22 September 2018 (S/2018/891) and Tehran on 7 June 2017 (S/2017/489) — both of which were condemned by the Security Council — are linked to, sponsored or encouraged by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

The recent media reports[1] regarding the Saudi conspiracy to sabotage the Iranian economy and assassinate Iranian officials by recruited terrorists confirms other relevant available intelligence and data. This should certainly be considered part of the larger plan of Saudi Arabia to destabilize the whole region.

Only one example of such an adventurist policy of Saudi Arabia is within its widespread systematic crimes in Yemen, including the deliberate targeting of mosques, hospitals, schools and historical sites, attacking wedding and funeral ceremonies and school buses, killing defenceless women and innocent children, destroying the basic infrastructure of the country, spreading contagious diseases and famine, as well as displacing millions of civilians. To prevent the continuation of such crimes, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia must be compelled to stop its brutalities and be held accountable for committing war crimes and crimes against humanity.

[1] *New York Times*, "Saudis Close to Crown Prince Discussed Killing Other Enemies a Year Before Khashoggi's Death", Mazzetti, Bergman and Kirkpatrick, 11 November 2018, accessible at: https://www.nytimes.com/2018/11/11/world/middleeast/saudi-iran-assassinations-mohammed-bin-salman.html?fbclid=IwAR24Wnz5Yabc4gEXB2_7SH6T1kDaaxS7-p1uX_PWFaaoDr9HjWiDMJFlcn0.

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The international community of States has a responsibility to adequately address such destabilizing behaviours of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and reject its criminal activities, especially its plans to assassinate Iranian officials.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Eshagh **Al Habib**
Ambassador
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

United Nations S/2018/1057

Security Council

Distr.: General
28 November 2018

Original: English

Letter dated 27 November 2018 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

With respect to the provocative statement by the Secretary of State of the United States wherein he openly threatened to starve Iranians, I would like to bring to your attention the following:

In a televised interview on 7 November 2018,[1] the Secretary of State of the United States reiterated the United States extremist policy of maximum pressure as well as imposition of the most severe sanctions on Iranian people, adding that "the Iranian leadership has to make a decision that they want their people to eat".

That statement, accompanied by the persistent wrongful acts of the United States, is an explicit viable threat to use starvation as a means of economic warfare aimed at the collective punishment of a population, thus a gross violation of the basic principles of international law. Given that the illegal unilateral sanctions imposed by the United States adversely and seriously affect the access of the people to medicine, pharmaceutical products and a number of other needs that are vital for their life and well-being, such policies and acts constitute a crime against humanity that is among the most serious crimes of international concern.

Moreover, for the reasons elaborated in the letters dated 11 May 2018 (A/72/869-S/2018/453) and 5 November 2018 (A/73/490-S/2018/988) from the Islamic Republic of Iran, the reintroduction and reimposition of the United States sanctions are in contravention of international law, including international human rights law, and resolution 2231 (2015) of the Security Council, as well as a disobedience to the provisional measures ordered by the International Court of Justice on 3 October 2018 (S/2018/899, annex). They just serve the ill-advised political aspirations of the United States administration against Iran, as was also elaborated in the letters dated 19 June 2017 (S/2017/521), 13 October 2017 (S/2017/862) and 3 January 2018 (S/2018/8) from the Islamic Republic of Iran.

That statement is furthermore a clear indication that, in furthering its bullying policies, the United States knows no limits and recognizes no principles to the extent that, in addition to imposing its unlawful sanctions against the Islamic Republic of Iran, it punishes other nations as well.

[1] https://www.state.gov/secretary/remarks/2018/11/287210.htm

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Like the past 40 years, the Islamic Republic of Iran will not only survive against all United States animosities, unlawful measures as well as overt and covert plots and plans, but also advance its objectives without sacrificing its sovereignty.

However, the United Nations and its Member States should condemn such outrageous policy statements, resist against such policies that threaten the very foundations of the United Nations and multilateralism, hold the Government of the United States accountable for such irresponsible policies and wrongful acts and compel it to adhere to the purposes and principles of the United Nations as well as international law.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Eshagh **Al Habib**
Ambassador
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

United Nations A/73/602-S/2018/1058

General Assembly
Security Council

Distr.: General
28 November 2018

Original: English

General Assembly
Seventy-third session
Agenda item 45
Question of Cyprus

Security Council
Seventy-third year

Letter dated 26 November 2018 from the Permanent Representative of Turkey to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit herewith a letter dated 20 November 2018, addressed to you by the Representative of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, İsmet Korukoğlu (see annex).

I would be grateful if the present letter and its annex could be circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 45, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Feridun H. **Sinirlioğlu**
Permanent Representative

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Annex to the letter dated 26 November 2018 from the Permanent Representative of Turkey to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Upon instructions from my Government, I am writing in response to the letter dated 14 November 2018, addressed to you by the Greek Cypriot Chargé d'affaires in New York and circulated as a document of the General Assembly and of the Security Council (A/73/565-S/2018/1023), which, yet again, includes inaccurate claims similar to those made in the Greek Cypriot representative's previous letters. I would like to bring the following to your kind attention with a view to setting the record straight.

Regarding the false assertions of "infringements of international air traffic regulations" and "violations of the national airspace of Cyprus", I wish to underline that flights within the sovereign airspace of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus take place with the full knowledge and permission of the relevant authorities of the State, over which the Greek Cypriot administration in South Cyprus has no jurisdiction or authority. The civil aviation authority of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus is the only competent body to provide air traffic and aeronautical information services within its own national airspace, and notices to airmen are issued in accordance with article 3 of the Convention on International Civil Aviation (Chicago Convention).

Similarly, the allegation in the letter regarding the use of Turkish Cypriot ports is also groundless, given the fact that the Greek Cypriot administration has no jurisdiction or right of say over Northern Cyprus. Furthermore, this claim ignores the present realities on the ground, namely, the existence of two independent, self-governing States on the island of Cyprus, each exercising sovereignty and jurisdiction within its respective territory.

As regards the false statements concerning Ercan Airport in the North, it should once again be underlined that the technologically up-to-date Ercan area control centre and airport in North Cyprus have been providing regular, reliable and safe air traffic services since the Greek Cypriot side's refusal in 1977 to provide air traffic services in the northern part of the island, in line with its policy of isolating the Turkish Cypriot people. Ever since, all flights within the sovereign airspace of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus have taken place with the full knowledge and permission of the Civil Aviation Department of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, over which it has full jurisdiction and control.

Moreover, the unjust isolation imposed on the Turkish Cypriots, which the Greek Cypriot side attempts to bolster by deeming all air and sea ports in Northern Cyprus "illegal", is in complete contravention of international law, as well as the call made by the then Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, in his report to the Security Council dated 28 May 2004 (S/2004/437), in which he clearly stated: "I would hope they [members of the Security Council] can give a strong lead to all States to cooperate both bilaterally and in international bodies to eliminate unnecessary restrictions and barriers that have the effect of isolating the Turkish Cypriots and impeding their development, deeming such a move as consistent with Security Council resolutions 541 (1983) and 550 (1984)."

The legislation of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus on aeronautical safety meets all standards and recommendations of the International Civil Aviation Organization, ensuring aviation safety and security by regulating all aspects of civil aviation, which includes the operation of airports and the management of air traffic. All airports in Northern Cyprus are in full conformity with international standards, and necessary upgrades have been performed to keep up with the developing

technology. Moreover, the number of air traffic controllers has been increased in accordance with the growing number of flights over the years, and the Ercan area control centre is in regular and close cooperation with the Ankara area control centre in order to ensure the safe conduct of all flights in the region. In 2017 alone, the number of passengers who used Ercan Airport stood at 3,962,541, and this number is expected to reach 4,200,294 in 2018. Moreover, in 2017, 27,197 aeroplanes used Ercan Airport for arrival and departure and 189,787 aeroplanes used the Ercan advisory airspace, and these numbers are expected to reach 27,469 and 193,583, respectively, in 2018. In that regard, it must also be stressed that the Turkish Cypriot side is committed to upholding the highest standards in the field of air navigation safety, in full conformity with the Chicago Convention of 1944, and that it is ready to cooperate with the Greek Cypriot authorities on this very important issue.

Availing myself of the present opportunity, I would like to call upon the Greek Cypriot side to discontinue such unfavourable and outdated rhetoric and remind it that its counterpart is, and has always been, the Turkish Cypriot side, not Turkey.

I should be grateful if the present letter could be circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 45, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) İsmet **Korukoğlu**
Representative
Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus